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ABSTRACT

This journal is designed as a forum for trainers, teachers, and trainees all over the world. Regular features include the following: "Conference Report"; "Process Options"; "People Who Train People"; "Training around the World"; "Session Report"; "Trainee Voices"; "Current Research"; "Just for Interest"; "A Trainer Like Me"; "Trainer Background"; "Trainer Mistakes"; and "Publications Received." Articles offered in this volume include the following: "PPP, ARC, TBL, and Now IDD!"; "Preparing Yourself as Well as Your Lessons"; "Interview with an Anesthetist Trainer"; "Long-Term Consultants Appraised and Developed"; "A Turkish Trainer Talks"; "Oops! Bungled!"; "Start with Learning, Then Consider Teaching"; "The Transition from Teacher to Trainer"; "Different Styles of Plenary Speaking"; "Interview with a Florist Trainer"; "The Skills of 'Idiots Savants'"; "Exploring Applications of Multiple Intelligence Theory"; "The Advantages of Online Teacher Education"; "Using E-Mail To Support Trainees During Their Practicum"; Ways We Use Metaphor in Teaching and Teacher Training"; "Evaluation by Action Research"; "The Nightmare of Reading Difficulty"; "Trainers Make Mistakes"; "Using an Introductory FL Lesson in TT, Three Views"; and "Groups Working on Participant Case Studies." (KFT)

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The Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL MAINLY FOR MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINERS

Volume 15 No. 1
Volume 15 No. 2
Volume 15 No. 3

T. Woodward

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Inside!

- PPP, ARC, TBL and now IDD! 4
- Preparing yourself as well as your lessons 9
- Working with trainers on THEIR concerns 11
- Interview with anaesthetist trainer 13
- Long-term consultants appraised and developed 14
- A Turkish trainer talks 21
- Oops! I bungled! 22

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!HAPPY FIFTEENTH VOLUME!

Dear Editor,

I would like to congratulate you and all contributors and helpers on the occasion of the publication of the fifteenth volume of The Teacher Trainer

It seems only yesterday that The Teacher Trainer started – a slim, pale blue matt booklet, with all sorts of nice things in it. I took out a subscription immediately, and have thoroughly enjoyed reading and contributing to later volumes over the years. It's now much thicker, and glossy ... Fifteen years! Incredible!

I've always enjoyed reading – and contributing to – the Teacher Trainer. When I decided to write this letter of congratulation, it was a good opportunity to leaf back and remind myself of some of the things I've particularly enjoyed: the series of interviews with trainers from other professions, for example, over a number of volumes; thoughtful sometimes provocative features (such as Tessa Woodward's discussion of profession 'jargon' in Volume 10); enlivening controversy (like the 'demonstration lessons'argument between Rod Bolitho and Ruth Wajnryb back in Volume 4)

The Teacher Trainer is not a conventional 'academic' journal – more a professional forum for sharing ideas and experiences. Its strength lies in the sense of community it conveys through contributions like the personal stories o trainers in different countries, anecdotes of success or failure, fun, crises, catharses. There is a sense of sharing here, a sense of 'we' as a profession, that many (perhaps more prestigious) journals lack. It provides a message of warmth and solidarity as well as substantial practical and theoretical input. It has, and will continue to have, a permanent place on my shelf – and in my heart!

Congratulations!

And here's to the next fifteen years!

Best wishes

Penny Ur

Dear Editor,

I have recently received the 42nd issue of **The Teacher Trainer**, the last issue for 2000, the magazine's 14th year. Your sustained effort over a seventh of a century (14x7 = 98) deserves the acknowledgement and gratitude of all of us in the TT area of EFL, worldwide. Those of us who have written for the journal are well aware of the care and patience with which you coax our sometimes shambolic words into better shapes. You have run a 1/7th of a century writers' workshop, the product of which has become the journal. As an editor you have sought to honour our thoughts and helped us to wake up and realise when our words do not themselves do honour to those thoughts.

The Teacher Trainer is, to my mind, an extraordinary archive that reflects much of the best of what has been happening in the UK influenced TT area of World EFL. I am lucky, as I have most of the early issues which were more thrilling, though less mature, than those of recent years. Yes, I think there was more WOW for me in the early years. How can those of us who have come into training in the past 5 years get hold of the ideas and thrills from those heady days?

Could you produce a bumper issue filled with the best of the first seven years?

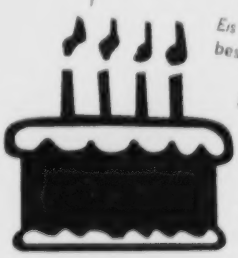
Could you persuade OUP, CUP, Heinemann Macmillan or ETp DELTA to bring out a **Best of the Teacher Trainer** volume which would gather all these ideas between two handy covers?

Could you put up some of the treasures of the 80's and 90's up on the web .... then I wouldn't even have to fork out for a book!

So much work done by you and your network of writers and so much of it hidden from many younger folk.

Eis anotera, as the Greek say, to higher things and best of luck with the next 14 years.

Mario Rinvolucri, (editor of **TTT's** fledgling sister publication, **Humanising Language Teaching**, which you can find at **<www.hltmag.co.uk>**)



ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

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The Teacher Trainer

Subscriptions information 3

Learner presentations, non-linguistic clarification and generic instruction sequence models in initial teacher training Peter Grundy 4

Having prepared and being prepared: self-grounding as a pre-requisite for successful classroom practice Simon Marshall 9

Conference report
Developing trainers in ELT, Leeds, UK 10

Process options
Getting real: one way of working with participant issues on trainer training courses Tessa Woodward 11

People who train people
Lucy Tano, consultant anaesthetist 13

Training around the world
Appraisal and development for long term consultants on ELT projects Tom Hunter 14

A trainer like me
Deniz Kurtoglu Eken 21

Training mistakes
Mario Escobar and Bonnie Lee La Madeleine 22

Publications received 23

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Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft in on paper typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as a Microsoft Word (98 or lower) or as an ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in **upper and lower case throughout**. Finally, please give an accurate word count. We try to publish your article within about five issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer.

It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication.

We look forward to reading your article!

Editorial

Welcome to an electric blue Volume Fifteen!

If you are a regular reader, you will know that we have a number of columns that keep coming back. These are:

People who train people*...about trainers in other fields
Interview... "meet" people you have heard of but not met yet
Conference reports and session reports.. read about events you didn't have time to attend
Process options... ways of working in the training classroom
Book review, Have you read..? and Publications received.. all keep you in touch with useful publications
Author's corner*... writers talk about their books
Observation and feedback.. ways of doing this sensitive task
The spoof page*.. pokes fun at our own work
Training around the world...how things are done in other countries
Trainer background... keeps you abreast of developments
Teacher selection and evaluation... thorny issues tackled
Current research.. issues trainers are investigating
Trainee voices*.. our clients speak
Readings for trainees*.... photocopiable gems for people you are training
Q and A... what is NLP? what is BIELT?
Just for interest.... non-ELT reprints on procrastination, paradigms...

In this issue I have also brought back two columns that fizzled out a long time ago (because they were ahead of their time?). These are: A trainer like me*... so you can meet a colleague in a different setting from your own
Training mistakes*... where trainers go public with their bungles, goofs and glitches!

As you can see, The Teacher Trainer has been building a real bank of themed articles via these ithreadsî that run from issue to issue.

* The columns live asterisked above are the ones we could do with more articles on. So, if you have something interesting to say, especially on one of these topics, zing me a first draft!

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward

The Editor

Subscriptions Information

Please support "The Teacher Trainer"! It's the only publication existing solely as a forum for the modern language teacher trainer.

The cost for three issues is:
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Three years at £65 including postage

The journal is for a specialist audience and so circulation figures will be considerably lower than for more general teaching magazines. The costs of producing a journal do not, however, sink appreciably just because the circulation is small. We have, therefore, settled on the figures above...

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Learner presentation, non-linguistic clarification and generic instruction sequence models in initial teacher training

Peter Grundy, University of Durham, UK

In this article I try to provide a description of effective instruction sequences for trainees on CTEFLA and comparable courses. Specifically, I argue that PPP, ARC, TBL, ESA have more in common than is generally recognized and suggest a more generic approach which allows for learner presentation and for outcomes that frequently have more than linguistic clarification going for them.

It's easy to forget, as we evaluate the plethora of post-**PPP** models, that the issue which sparked the **PPP** debate was the need to agree a preferred instruction sequence to recommend to intending teachers. But when you think about it, it was really a matter of chance that the earliest critiques of **PPP** were voiced in the context of teacher training rather than in the context of methodological appropriacy. More than ten years ago now, *The Teacher Trainer* printed two articles (Grundy 1989a, 1989b) in which I criticized **PPP** on the grounds that it was predicated on a discredited theory of language (North American Structuralism) and a discredited theory of learning (Behaviorism) from which an ineffective method (Audiolingualism) had been derived – the appliance of bad science in fact. I suggested that intending teachers deserved better, and recommended a series of ideas banks from which classroom activities could be designed. These two papers were amongst the first to question **PPP**. Subsequently, *The Teacher Trainer* published a thoughtful response (Parrott 1990) in which the author expressed disappointment that the second article had failed to provide a workable alternative to **PPP**. Since then, there have been many specific and detailed attempts to do just that[1]. Perhaps now the time has come to think generically.

The rationale for PPP

The many criticisms of **PPP** as a practice are well known: it assumes that a single model of instruction is equally effective and motivating for beginner and advanced learners alike; in the classroom, *Production* doesn't seem to relate much to *Presentation* and *Practice*; it's too inflexible; etc. These criticisms tend to obscure the fundamental rationale on which **PPP** was based: that there is an empirical body of language *out there* which can be segmented and presented to learners. Now that we know that this fundamental rationale is misconceived and that language and the language acquisition process are essentially innate, the presentation of model structures becomes at best otiose[2]. To put it another way, *Presentation* is a function of the belief that language is outside the learner. Nowadays, we prefer trial and error approaches in which learners try to fit the language they hear and use into the templates they infer for it.

Perhaps this point needs illustrating. A language learner who hears and understands the SVO sentence "I'm studying English" will infer – without conscious awareness of course – that the head-parameter setting for English is head + adjunct (VO). In trying to make sense of subsequent input, again without conscious knowledge, the learner will be expecting to encounter other head + adjunct structures – prepositions followed by the nouns they govern rather than nouns preceding the postpositions that govern them, right branching relative clauses, etc. Similarly, the learner will listen out for further instances of the verb *study* in order to test the (false) hypothesis that it strictly subcategorizes a direct object. Similar points to these being made about syntax and the lexicon could be made about phonology.

This is not to say that input is unimportant – it's self-evident that without input we cannot acquire language. But it certainly doesn't justify *Presentation* as the necessary first stage of the instruction sequence. Nor does it mean that all input needs to come from the teacher. Indeed much learner-provided input is of real quality precisely because the providers have to struggle to modify their output so as to make it comprehensible input for fellow learners. The *Presentation* model also overlooks the fact that learners are able to reject as suspect data which fail to confirm expectable hypotheses about the structure of the target language.

Where does all this lead? I hope to the seemingly postmodern[3] (but nevertheless valid) notion that the *Presentation* phase of **PPP** lessons can also be learner provided. This applies not only to **PPP** lessons: indeed, learner language is every bit as much authentic as native speaker language, so that instruction sequences that call for authentic use, such as Scrivener's model (1994a, 1994b), can equally use learner data. Accepting this point has considerable implications for methodology and, more narrowly, for descriptions of the instruction sequence in language learning – as we shall see.

Top-down and bottom-up models

As we all know, in the last five or six years there have been no shortages of suggestions for post-**PPP** models. For me, and I suspect many others engaged in day-to-day teacher training and trainering, the problem is that acronyms such as **PPP** and **ARC** and **TBL** imply a top-down, theory-driven view of the instruction sequence. They are too much part of the ELT-is-a-scientific-apparatus approach which has rightly been criticised as inappropriate, for export at least, by Adrian Holliday (1994).

A bottom-up alternative would start with demonstration lessons from which apprentice teachers might generalise instruction sequences. This is in the spirit of Scott Thornbury's (1996) argument that experienced trainers have

"mental images" of grammar, reading and writing lessons which can serve as model structures for apprentice teachers. However, there are practical difficulties with this approach. For a start, it requires each and every trainee to abstract the "mental images" from a series of demonstration lessons that are bound to vary greatly both within a single trainer's repertoire and from trainer to trainer. And it implies that different types of lesson have more in difference than is really the case. Moreover, it's doubtful whether every trainer will in fact provide lessons of the quality and range required to provide trainees with a starter kit of appropriate quality. These are, of course, strong arguments against the atheoretical craft model of teacher training which has recently been promoted in the UK by a couple of dozy governments and a Department for Education and Employment who should know better.

How then to share with intending teachers effective instruction sequences which reflect the expertise of experienced teachers in a way which is economical and doesn't privilege either theory or practice at the expense of the other? First, I'm going to run through a number of models showing how effective instruction sequences can be demonstrated in teacher training, and then consider how model and method can be coherently viewed in initial teacher training.

Demonstrating models – ARC

Jim Scrivener's **ARC** instruction model consists of three stages:

- Authentic Use, where the language encountered is unrestricted
- Restricted Use, where the language encountered is restricted in some way (idealised, controlled by the teacher, etc.)
- Clarification/Focus, where the learner is invited to engage cognitively with aspects of the language which are treated as teaching points.

These stages are potentially recombinable in other orders, for example, **CRA**, which results in new variant **PPP**. They can also be used recursively within the same instruction sequence, for example, **ARAC**, to give a lesson in which there are two authentic input stages.

Imagine I had been observed by trainees a year or two back when I was working with an elementary class on ways of talking about the future. The trainees would have seen a lesson in which one of my aims was to help the learners to think about ways of maintaining their interest in English after the end of their course when they were back home and far from the motivating atmosphere of an intensive course in Britain. My instructions went like this:

Stage 1: Find a partner and spend a few minutes interviewing each other about what you intend to do while you are still in Britain and later when you go home to keep on improving your English.

Stage 2a: Working alone, think long and hard about these strategies and then write down four sentences describing your future plans, one beginning with "I'm going to..", one with "I will..", one with "I hope..", and one with "I want..". Each should be written on a separate peel-off address label.

Stage 2b: Come and choose a picture of a landscape taken from a colour magazine and enlarged to A3 size on the photocopier. (There was a choice of four.) Imagine you are standing in front of this landscape and that it's your future stretching out into the distance in front of you. Think very carefully about where you would like to place each of your four sentences in this 'future landscape' so as to reflect your plans and hopes. When you've decided, peel off each of your sentences and stick it in the appropriate place.

Stage 3: Find a new partner with a different picture from yourself. Explain to each other why you have stuck the sentences where you have.

Stage 4: "OK, grammar! Tell me about *going to* and *will*." I wait for someone obliging to tell me that *going to* is nearer than *will*, and then I ask them to check that this is true on their future landscapes – it turns out that sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't. A discussion follows in which the uses of *going to* and *will* become clearer. Next I ask about the difference between the structures that follow *hope* and *want* on the one hand and the structures that follow *will* on the other. I tell them one or two very simple things about the modal auxiliaries (and even maybe about their historical development in English).

Imagine that this lesson is observed by a group of trainees and that in the follow-up session, the trainer discusses a series of instruction sequence models – **PPP**, **ARC**, **TBL**, etc. The trainees are asked to identify which sequence they had just observed. Although I didn't have the sequence in mind as I planned this lesson, they reveal to me that my lesson followed the **ARC** model, but with the authentic language coming from the learners:

Authentic Use (Stage 1 – Learner authentic talk)
Restricted Use (Stage 2 – The teacher specified the sentence starters and provided the pictorial context in which the finished sentences were to be used)
Authentic Use (Stage 3 – More learner authentic talk)
Clarification and Focus (Stage 4 – Discussion of grammar points).

Demonstrating models – TBL

There are many descriptions of task based learning. For the sake of convenience I'll work with the model described by Jane Willis in *The Teacher Trainer* (1994: 8.1, 17-20). This consists of six stages:

- introduction to the topic or task
- doing the task
- planning to report back
- reporting back
- teacher input
- review of student work and further practice.

From time to time when I visit universities outside Britain, I'm asked to teach English classes. Over the years, I've developed a repertoire of activities which usually work well in this situation. This is how one of them goes:

continued

Stage 1: The learners close their eyes while I recite the first verse of Thomas Hood's poem *I remember, I remember*. I recite it several times. The first time, the learners merely listen. The second time, they identify striking words and phrases. The third time they say these words or phrases under their breath as I speak them aloud. The fourth time, they join in with me. The fifth time, we say the verse together. (This is a technique I learnt from Jim Wingate. It's described in Bassnett and Grundy *Language through Literature*, p77-8.)

Stage 2: The learners work in groups of three or four and are given fifteen minutes in which to prepare a Sign language translation of the first verse of *I remember I remember*. I tell them that each group will be required to perform their Sign version in perfect synchronization in front of the rest of the class. As you can imagine, this results in feverish activity as they decide how to represent the following text in Sign language:

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

Stage 3: When they are almost ready, I move from group to group advising them that they won't be allowed to speak the verse as they sign it in front of the class. This prompts further feverish practice.

Stage 4: The class watches as each group performs their translation.

Stage 5: I ask about and comment on the performances. Typically, I discuss, amongst many other features:
- the representation of *I*: occidental (pointing at chest) or oriental (pointing at nose), or even whether Sign might be a null-subject option language in which subject pronouns like *I* are 'dropped'. Thus the representation of the very first word involves both cultural and structural considerations.
- the representation of *born*. Typically, students represent this meaning by a cradling gesture. This leads to a discussion of taboo language and euphemism, before I make the point that in real Sign languages there's no reason for *born* to be represented iconically at all and that any arbitrary handshape will do fine (although in fact in British Sign Language it is iconic).
- the representation of *little window*. One word or two? (I.e. is *little* a reference or a referent modifier?)
- the representation of *came* and *brought*. Sometimes learners represent the deictic element correctly (i.e. movement *towards* the speaker) but often they don't. This leads to a discussion of *come* and *go*, *take* and *bring* and the representation of context in deictic reference.
- how to represent past, duration, frequency, etc.
- how to represent idioms
- the extent to which poetic language is more iconic that standard language.

Stage 6: If time allows, I ask the groups to consider what changes they would make if they were to do the activity again.

(Stages 2-6 are described in Bassnett and Grundy, pp 36-7.)

Again, imagine that this lesson is observed by a group of trainees and that in the follow-up session, the trainer discusses a series of instruction sequence models. The trainees are asked to identify which sequence they had been watching. Although I didn't have the sequence in mind as I planned this lesson, they reveal to me that I have been working with a **Task Based Learning** model:

Introduction to the topic (Stage 1 – Jim Wingate's familiarization activity)
Doing the task (Stage 2 – Translating the verse into Sign language)
Planning to report back (Stage 3 – Rehearsal)
Reporting back (Stage 4 – Performing the Sign poems)
Teacher input (Stage 5 – Drawing the learners' attention to matters that need to be taken into account in doing the task optimally)
Review of student work and further practice (Stage 6 – Further work on an improved translation).

What's really striking about this analysis is that you would hardly think if you observed this lesson that it simulated the **Task Based Learning** sequence. Or that performing the Sign translations could be such a clever and entertaining way of *Reporting Back*, which can all too easily become long drawn out, boring and unproductive.

Demonstrating models – new wave PPP

This is Jane Willis's excellent definition of traditional **PPP** taken from *The Teacher Trainer* (1996: 17):

Presentation stage – The teacher presents to the class, in a clear context, the form and use of a particular pattern
Practice stage – The teacher leads controlled practice using different activities: e.g. drills, grammar games, dialogues for role-plays
Production stage or free stage – The teacher sets up an activity where students are encouraged to use language freely, the aim being to "produce" the new language learnt in a given situation.

I noticed a number of examples of new wave **PPP** at IATEFL98 when I was first thinking about writing this article. They were 'new wave' in the sense that although you could recognize the traditional three-part structure, one or more of the three **P**'s was given a distinctly postmodern interpretation. There was Bruce McGowen's description of how to teach younger learners: *Watch and Listen* (the teacher demonstrates how to make a paper model, for instance) → *Do and Say* (the children make the model themselves, talking it through as they do it) → *Show and Tell* (the children show others, perhaps friends or family, what they can do). There was Jeremy Harmer's *Engage* → *Study* → *Activate*, the "straight arrows" version of which (i.e. first engage, then study, then activate) he likened to **PPP**.

But in fact you didn't need to be at IATEFL98 to encounter new wave **PPP**. This is a lesson that I tried seventeen years ago when I got my first VCR and subsequently described in *The Teacher Trainer* (Grundy 1989b). The learners were a

mixed ability group consisting of any adult in Durham who wanted to learn English for free and didn't mind being the victim of a teacher with their first VCR. It went like this:

Stage 1: I played a sequence of advertisements several times on fast forward (and so without sound) while the learners decided how many advertisements they were watching. We gave each a name ("Soup" for the Campbell's soup advertisement, "Nescafé" for the coffee advertisement, etc.). We divided the blackboard into eight squares, one for each advertisement.

Stage 2a: I played the sequence again and again (still fast forward), and the learners wrote the vocabulary associated with the images on the screen in the appropriate squares on the board. So the learners reconstructed the *Nescafé* advertisement by writing words like 'coffee' and 'cup' and 'face'.

Stage 2b: Then I asked the learners to write down in the appropriate square on the board any actual words that had appeared on the screen (such as "Nescafé").

Stage 3: Working in small groups, the learners tried to reconstruct the storyline of one of the advertisements. Later we watched the advertisements at normal speed and compared the students' versions with the originals.

Again, imagine that this lesson is observed by a group of trainees and that in the follow-up session they are asked to identify which instruction sequence they had observed. Although I didn't have the sequence in mind as I planned this lesson, they reveal to me that I have been working with a postmodern form of **PPP** in which the presentation is silent:

Presentation (Stage 1 – Watching the advertisements)
Practice (Stages 2a and 2b – Working on the language implicit in the presentation)
Production (Stage 3 – Reconstructing the storylines)

It's tempting to make the point that this lesson is a powerful metaphor for the language learning process: first there is native speaker talk that the learners can't understand (on this occasion, they can't hear it); gradually they recover fragments in the form of isolated words; then they hypothesize the whole before testing their hypothesis against the original that this time they can understand. I wonder if instances of learning that imitate the fundamental learning process are more likely to be successful than instances that don't...

IDD – Towards a generic instruction sequence

And this leads to a further thought. It isn't only that the *model* of language doesn't always need to be an example of standard language provided by a fluent speaker: it's equally the case that the *outcome* of any learning sequence can have more than a mere linguistic focus. The clarification may be personal as well as linguistic. Methodology shouldn't, many would argue, be restricted only to language instruction, but should also include learning about oneself through language. Language is thus the means of externalizing internal cognitive processes. It was a long time ago now (in methodology terms) when Tony Howatt first made the neat observation that in "strong" versions of communicative language teaching learners are encouraged to use language in order to learn it rather than encouraged to learn language in order to use it (1984:279).

Let me illustrate. A more generic way of thinking through instruction sequences which are learner led might go something like this: *Invest* → *Do* → *Decide*.

Invest – usually working alone, the learners talk or write. This presented language will form the basis of their subsequent class activity. Often it works best if this language is produced within some template suggested by the teacher. For beginner and elementary levels, the investment may be numerical (writing down telephone number, height, weight, shoe size, etc.) or visual (arranging magazine pictures so as to make a story; drawing pictures to represent what they did at the weekend, for example). The teacher will then help them to turn this investment into talk. Although this is new wave *Presentation*, it is also restricted (as per Scrivener) by the template provided by the teacher. It is also the first stage of **Task Based Learning** – *Introduction to the topic or task*.

Do – usually in pairs or small groups, the learners work on their original language investment. The purpose is to prepare the ground for a decision. It is new wave *Practice* because it involves working with the language invested in the first phase. But it is also authentic, unscripted learner talk (Scrivener). And it's the *doing* phase of **Task Based Learning**.

Decide – usually working alone, but when appropriate with colleagues, the learners *clarify* at least one of the items on the following by no means exhaustive list:

- language, as in the case of *I remember, I remember*
- some aspect of their personal lives. See *Habits* and *Escapes* in the table below
- both a linguistic area and a personal area, as in the case of the elementary lesson involving landscapes described above
- a cognitive puzzle, as in the case of the work on advertisements described above

Put in **TBL** terms, when the clarification or decision-making is in the personal domain, the students have reported back to themselves and set an agenda for further lifestyle practice.

Although I didn't think in terms of instruction sequence models in my 1989 *Teacher Trainer* papers, two of the sample lessons suggested there fit exactly this **IDD** model in which what is clarified is not so much linguistic as personal. One was called *Habits* (this can also be found in Seth Lindstromberg's *The Recipe Book* 1990: 69-70), the other *Escapes*. The table below represents the instruction sequences of these lessons. What is notably postmodern about them is that the language 'presented' comes from the learners, while what is 'produced' is as much a personal as a language outcome. It shows that if we allow *Presentation* to be learner provided and *Clarification* to be in the personal as well as in the linguistic domain, new wave **PPP** (as in *Habits* and *Escapes* or in Bruce McGowen's *Watch* → *Do* → *Show* model) and the model instruction sequences proposed by Scrivener and Willis are all remarkably alike.

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	Invest	Do	Decide
Habits			
	Working alone, learners list three good and two bad habits.	Working with a succession of partners, learners make suggestions for helping each other to give up bad habits. They see if there are good habits they can learn from each other.	Working alone, learners think about what they have heard and decide which remedies they are going to try for their bad habits and which new good habits they are going to adopt.
Escapes			
	Working alone, learners complete a questionnaire asking about where they would go if they escaped, who they would go with, what they would take with them, etc.	Working with a succession of partners, learners decide if they would really do what they wrote down or whether their partners actually have better ideas.	Working alone, learners revise their original plans and at the same time try to decide whether they are actually escapers or stay at homes.
PPP			
	New wave Presentation - learners provide language models	New wave Practice - learners recycle their own model language	New wave Production - a recipe for future action decided
ARC			
	Authentic use - learners talk freely and provide their own authentic talk	Restricted use - e.g., learners write into teacher provided templates	Clarification/Focus - personal issues resolved
TBL			
	Introduction to topic and task	Do the task	Report back to self and set future agenda

Conclusion 1: Teacher preparation

Apprentice teachers benefit from understanding how experienced teachers' mental images of good lessons can be modelled as instruction sequences. Initially, therefore, trainers' demonstration lessons should be designed to reveal a range of models. This bottom-up approach, i.e. going from lesson to model, is much more likely to enable the trainees to take the next step of designing their own lessons around model instruction sequences.

Once trainees have understood the basic principles of lesson design around an instruction sequence model, the trainer can move into new wave lesson planning – explaining that presentation can be by learners (supporting this with the SLA argument rehearsed above) and that clarification and focus can relate to personal decision making as well as to linguistic domains. In other words, there are things we need to learn about ourselves which, incidentally, we learn through language. Thinking in this way enables the trainer to show the trainees that many lessons have a generic structure in which what once appeared to be irreconcilable models are shown to have considerable overlap. The aim is gradually to free trainees from the models on which they must initially rely and enable them to work in the intuitive way in which experienced teachers work.

Conclusion 2: Methodology

There is a clear distinction in my mind (but not I think in the minds of everyone who's written about instruction sequences) between models and methods. A model of the kind discussed in this paper describes only the instruction sequence, irrespective of any justifying rationale. A teaching method characterizes the techniques, practices and frames by means of which instructed language learning is accomplished. A method appeals to a rationale which justifies the techniques and practices it stipulates. Thus the instruction sequence is simply a technique included within a method, alongside techniques for promoting autonomy, stimulating metacognitive function, managing classrooms and grouping learners.

The resulting question is whether there is an unambiguous methodological rationale for the kinds of models proposed here and the kinds of methods within which they will be located. This rationale needs to appeal, minimally, to a theory of language, a theory of language acquisition and a theory of instruction. It isn't so easy to derive contemporary methods from current theories of language and language acquisition as it was to derive **PPP** as a model and Audiolingualism as a method from North American Structuralism. But it isn't by any means impossible. However, this is not the time or place since our context is teacher training. And even if it were the place, I've exceeded my word limit.

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[1] See Bruton (1998) for a critical review of some of them.

[2] This critique is based on the generative tradition associated with the work of Chomsky and is perhaps best known to language teachers through Krashen's acquisition/learning dual competence hypothesis. A particularly good early book is Karl Diller's *The Language Teaching Controversy*. Lilian Wong Fillmore also has an excellent chapter on 'Teachability and second language acquisition' in Rice and Schiefelbusch's *The Teachability of Language*.

[3] I use the term "postmodern" in this article to convey the notion that paradoxes have replaced certainties. What was once certain now appears problematic. There are now no easy definitions.

OUR SISTER MAGASINE

Pilgrims runs a web magasine for teachers called Humanising Language Teaching. You can find it at www.hltmag.co.uk. It is free and aims to provide EFL teachers with "practical techniques as well as overarching ideas". The magasine was started up about two years ago and is currently edited mostly by Mario Rinvolucri. An attractive feature of the webzine is that its editorship moves around the world issue by issue from the UK to Uruguay, Poland, Brazil and other places. Take a look!

Having prepared and Being prepared: Self grounding as a pre-requisite for successful classroom practice

by Simon Marshall ,UK.

Last night I spent a significant amount of time preparing an hour's worth of teaching (and hopefully learning) time. I was pleased with my yield. The activities were home grown and seemed to dovetail and complement each other appropriately. Job done, I moved on *having prepared* my lessons.

Today I entered the classroom with a boyish eagerness to activate my efforts. I was hurriedly confident, anticipating "a good productive time to be had by all."

I started with a bang, the learners with a whimper. As I tried even harder to muster engagement, the class grew more and more introverted. I felt terrible-they looked worse. I lost my pen, misplaced my lesson plan, left the classroom to look for my briefcase which in fact had been next to my chair all along. I returned breathless and at long last sat down, albeit with a strong sense of defeat.

It was then that remembrance called. I had devised the lesson not the group. My pace had nothing in common with theirs. I came to realise that a little calmness and quietude might be in order. I slowed myself and managed to exchange a coarse enthusiasm for a more attuned awareness of "the other". I stopped. They started. Flow replaced dissonance and human involvement superceded 'student response". In short "my class" became "our class".

I remembered, as I had done before but forgotten all too easily, that I need to *be prepared*

in myself in order to work effectively in the classroom. Physically I need to relate to my body and all its aggregates if I am to achieve any worthwhile "lesson aims". If I don't, the music will read as a wonderful score at home but result in cacophony in the concert hall.

Then, what to do? How can I assemble this equilibrium of body and mind? For me, it helps to keep in mind that slower is not a crime. By decreasing the speed of my movement both internal and external, the more measured quality of my "presence" provides a better grounding for my "performance".

So what are the implications for teacher trainers? How can we help trainees focus on their own presentation of *being*? I'm sure many of us have overseen sessions called "class management" paying heed to group building activities, giving clear instructions and the question of teacher talking time. Maybe we could encorporate more "self management activities" in our sessions, ones which centre on such challenges as "I-here-now", "They-here-now" and teacher

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talking *quality*. (Including tone of voice, selection of phrase and the intentions behind chosen speech acts). Many novice and experienced teachers feel the urge to "go fast" lest they "fail to give enough". This often leads to them filling time at the expense of transforming it into fruitful experience.

I'd now like to suggest one activity that focuses on slowing down.

1. Ask the trainees to line up and imagine they are an irritable queue in a busy supermarket. Appoint a cashier. The person at the front of the queue is asked to get the shopping out of their basket and pay at their own pace despite complaints from behind that they are "too slow". (As such the payer is the teacher) Although uncomfortable, this exercise provides trainees with the opportunity to remain in contact with themselves and not to be swept along by feelings of pressure.

The existentialist formulation "to be is to do" asserts that the facticity of our bare existence suffices as an equivalent to action. For me, this coefficient needs to be galvanised out of a stark passivity and inertia. However, it may act as a reminder that, if we, as trainers, acknowledge the pivotal importance of nurturing greater mobilised attention, a heightened awareness of the world as it stands and cultivating a feel for "being here now" then we shall be tapping a resource that enriches our classroom practice beyond the frontiers of any arcane restricted methodologies.

Recommended reading

Existentialism J. Maquarie (Penguin)
On being freer C Gattegno (Educational Solutions)
In search of the miraculous- fragments of an unknown teaching PD Ouspensky (Arkana)

Journal Exchanges

"The Teacher Trainer" has arranged journal exchanges with

IATEFL SIG TT Newsletter (UK)
English Language Teaching Journal (UK)
Modern English Teacher (UK)
GRETA (Spain)
Teacher Education Quarterly (USA)
Forum (USA)
TESOL Matters (USA)
English Teaching Professional (UK)

and is abstracted by 'Language Teaching', The British Education Index, the ERIC clearing house and Contents Pages in Education.

CONFERENCE REPORT

DEVELOPING TRAINERS IN ELT: Strategies, Issues, Perspectives

A conference held by the IATEFL Special Interest Group for Teacher Trainers at the University of Leeds 10-12 November, 2000.

It was a real wonder that the sixty or seventy of us who did attend were able to. By road there were fears that panic buying of fuel would mean getting stranded without petrol. There was chaos on the railways as floods, recent accidents and checking of the tracks meant no times were being given out for any departure or arrival. Personally I got to the conference after ten hours on the national express (!) coaches and had to leave early Sunday in order to stand a chance of making it back to work on Monday morning!.
Transport difficulties aside though, it was an interesting event held in a charming church- like building set amongst chestnut trees showing good autumn colour.

Apart from plenaries given by Donald Freeman and Tessa Woodward (see page 11 for an account of this one), there was usually a choice of three talks on at any one time. (I say talks and I mean talks for all the presentations I went to at least involved mostly full frontal teacher talk. Strange really for a conference of teacher trainers. Surely we don't all work this way at home? So why do we fall back on talking rather than showing or involving when we "go public"?)

I learned a lot about some very thorough, well run courses for teacher trainers at Bilkent University in Turkey (Deniz Kurtoglu Eken), for EFL teachers wanting to learn how to be Business English teachers at Cambridge Eurocentre(Michael Sneyd) and for school- based teacher educators at the University of Veszprem in Hungary(Zoltan Poor).
I learned a lot about classifying different kinds of trainer and trainee exploratory talk (Jennifer Jarvis), (Margit Szesztay) . From Donald Freeman's plenary I gained some new insights into the phrase "tools of the trade" as Donald uses it to refer to conceptual tools such as "feedback" as well as to more familiar items such as books and CD Roms.

I learned a great deal from preparing my own talk, from giving it and listening to participant questions on it and then from thinking about those questions most of the eight hours in the coach on the way home. The results of that work are on page #####in this issue!

Thanks to Jenny Jarvis, Angi Malderez and Jenny Johnson for organising a good event.

Tessa Woodward, Founder of the IATEFL SIG TT.

PROCESS OPTIONS

GETTING REAL: ONE WAY OF WORKING WITH PARTICIPANT ISSUES ON TRAINER TRAINING COURSES

by Tessa Woodward, UK.

Introduction

On many of the courses I organise with and for modern language teacher trainers, I try to support three areas or roles of their training work. These are, first, the role of language learner and user. Regardless of whether the trainer is a native or non- native speaker of the target language, there is plenty of useful work to be done on language change, new ways of describing language, and learning professional terminology. The trainer needs to be not only a proficient target language user but also a decent target language teacher and so there is plenty that can be done on this role too such as updating methodology and evaluating recent materials. The role of teacher trainer is obviously important and work here can include helping participants to vary their techniques and materials in the areas of observation, feedback, course design, teacher evaluation, training methodology and so on. I believe that courses revolving around these three areas can be very fruitful.

Almost without exception however over the last few years, either in pre- course forms, first day negotiation sessions, in coffee breaks or written in dialogue journals, participants on trainer training courses have raised other issues that do not fall neatly within the areas mentioned above. I'll give some examples of the sort of thing I mean. Participants have said things like :

"I can't get on with the other members of my training team"
"Our team doesn't share"
"What can we do about trainee resistance?"
"When I go back I'll have to work on my own and I don't think the teachers really want me to observe their classes"
"My boss never delegates interesting work to me even though I've been working there for ages. I'm gong to be "an assistant" for ever!"
"I find it really difficult to concentrate when I'm observing. Also when people are talking about their lessons, I find myself drifting off"

These quotes represent slightly more personal concerns that go beyond, beneath, behind the apparently rather more straightforward professional roles mentioned at the start.

What problems do these sorts of issues raise for me as the course leader?

These issues seem to me to be about the person within the professional. I believe I have to be careful here. I am not a psychologist or trained counsellor nor do I wish to be one or act like one. The participants have not spent time and money to be on a psychological counselling course. Yet they have trusted themselves, the group and me enough to raise the issues and ask for some sort of discussion.

We could then just arrange some sort of discussion. I have fears about bad conversations however! I have seen enough of groups and group talk to know that, while sometimes group discussion of one person's issue can go wonderfully well, sometimes it can be marked by domination, clever talk that gets the presenter of the issue nowhere real, general sympathy but little learning or high-jacking by group members or the group leader who really want to talk about their own issues and not about the one presented. It may also be the case that only very few of the group are interested in the issue that a participant raises and think that course time is being wasted.

The problem I have found for myself then is how to work on more personal issues raised by participants in a way that is useful and fair to all.

Straightforward solutions.

It may be possible to do one of the following:

Talk to the person one to one or have a letter writing exchange with them so that group time is not used up. This does assume however that your and the individual participant's own "wisdom" is enough for a positive outcome.

Generalise the issue at first so that, for example, the first issue above is "covered " in a session where individually, then in pairs and groups, participants list "The attributes of a good team member". Then personalise by asking people to rate themselves individually and privately in terms of how good a team member they think they are.

Another way of working

I will now describe another way of working that I have been playing with over the last couple of years.

Step One

I indicate that, if the group is interested, we can work on participant issues in such a way that the group will learn more, not just about the particular issue but also about discussion ground rules, critical incident analysis and methods of analysing professional work. If the group expresses interest and willingness to do this, I suggest that the group evolve some discussion ground rules. I mention some possibles but it's important that the group evolves a set and agrees them. Here are some examples from a recent group.

> Listen really well.
> Don't tell people outside the group personal details that come up.
> Don't get into difficult stuff just before a long break like a weekend.
> Don't show judgement by what you say or gestures you make.
> Give the presenter the benefit of the doubt!
> Be courageous and have a gentle touch.

As discussion gets going later on, I make time periodically to discuss the agreed ground- rules with the group and decide

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if they are useful, possible and desirable. The group adapts them if necessary.

Step two.
Next I show participants how to turn a quote or initial expression of concern into an incident. I like to give an example of my own first so that participants are clear what happens in this way of working and can gauge the amount of risk involved. So I will express a concern. One I used recently was about the amount of power a teacher has when controlling activities. I write it up on the board as a specific real incident so that everyone can see the bare bones of what it was that triggered my concern. An example here might be: "I asked a student to do something and when he said he didn't want to I made a joke!"
I base the rest of this section on David Tripp's " Critical incident analysis". (Tripp 1993)
The "embryonic incident" written up on the board is just a start. Next I have to make sure, by rewriting it in front of the group, that it contains plenty of concrete detail, records my own feelings and gives as much proof or verification of events as possible too. When I've finished, there is a good long paragraph on the board with enough detail about a specific incident for participants to have something real to analyse.

Step three

Next, the incident is analysed in some way. The first way I introduce to participants is Tripp's questions (Tripp page 27). I give out a handout with these questions on and encourage participants to ask me as many as they want.
Tripp's questions range from the descriptive (What happened ?) to the affectual (What does it feel like?) to the explanatory (Why did it occur ?) to the classificatory (What is it an example of ?) to the social (Is it just?) and further yet. They are very interesting questions and move discussion past the superficial very quickly. Because the questions are written by Tripp and visible to all nobody needs to feel they are being over personal by asking them or victimised by being asked them.
I think about the participants' questions and try to answer them. I try to generate hypotheses. It is at this point that we have a "critical incident".

Step four

After participants have used as many of Tripp's questions as they like, and after I have thought about them, tried to answer them and have come up with some hypotheses about my incident, I think about where I have got to. What needs to be checked, confirmed, changed, discovered before I can go any further with my understanding of the incident? I draw my own conclusions and mention these to the group or write them down so I don't forget them.

Step five

Now that we have all experienced an example of writing up an incident, analysing it and have discussed our previously generated group discussion ground- rules, we are ready to move onto a participant issue.
Any participant who wishes goes through steps two to four above. It's always the person who raised the concern who has the right to draw their own conclusions at the end of the analysis.

Later on in the life of the group

In my experience, once one group member has had the chance to presene an incident and analyse it with the group, others realise what a rare chance it is to have such a focused professional community working on their behalf and ask to be the next to present a concern for analysis.
To ring the changes and to give group members the maximum amount of skill possible to take home to their own training communities, I gradually introduce new frameworks or methods of analysis. Ones I have found particularly fruitful are:
John Heron's six category intervention analysis (See Heron 1990 and Head and Taylor 1997)
Robert Dilt's logical levels (See O'Connor and Seymour 1993)
Once participants have worked with a few different methods of analysing their incidents, later presenters can choose which framework they would like the group to use or the trainer can suggest which might be most beneficial for the particular issue raised.

Concluding thoughts

I think this way of working is probably best with around 7-15 participants.
In practice participants seem to feel that, although an issue is initially raised by one participant, it nearly always resonates with their own concerns in some way. And if it doesn't then they are still learning a lot about critical incident analysis, and frameworks for analysing professional work.

Background Reading

Bowker, D (1998) 'Helping teachers to reflect ..one application of NLP' in *The Teacher Trainer* 12/1 pp19-21

Head, K & P Taylor (1997) Readings *in teacher development* Heineman

Heron, J (1990) *Helping the client* Sage

O'Connor, J & J Seymour (1993) *Introducing NLP* Thorsons

Tripp, D (1993) *Critical Incidents in teaching* Routledge

This article started life as a plenary talk at the IATEFL SIG TT conference in Leeds in November 2000. I would like to thank the organisers of the conference for giving me the opportunity to write down my thoughts and participants in the Leeds session for helping me to explain and refine my ideas. Thanks to Keith Morrow, Jenny Jarvis, Peter Grundy, Angi Melderez in particular. The warts remain my own of course.

Introduction

Lucy Tano works as a consultant anaesthetist in a team of nine anaesthetists in a district general hospital in the South East of England. She was born, raised and trained in South Africa and moved to the UK in 1997. Her own training consisted of seven years at medical school followed by one year out and then five years as a registrar in anaesthetics, making thirteen years altogether. In South Africa Lois worked up to 100 hours a week. She was involved in the training of junior members in the anaesthetics department and also of medical students generally. In the UK she also helps to train young anaesthetists in her department and operating department assistants.

Becoming a trainer in South Africa

TW. How did you become a trainer, Lucy?
LT. As we became more senior it was just assumed that we would carry on the training and teaching that we had been given. There was no formal education given to us as to how to do the training. We were a department of about seventy anaesthetists and juniors were just put with us in the theatre for the purpose of being trained. They didn't have any other trainers or teachers.
TW. Did you talk to the juniors before and after the time in the theatre?
LT. Yes before and after, but also they asked questions during the work in the theatre. We taught them practical hands- on procedures.
TW. What were the key things you were trying to share with them?
LT. To be able to provide safe anaesthesia, basics such as maintaining airways, administering safe basic anaesthetics. Once I was happy with that, I'd allow them to go on to more difficult procedures.
TW. How long did you have a junior with you?
LT. We' d have one person with us for about six weeks. They'd shadow us during the day and at night. We'd be together all the time to start with and then gradually spend less and less time guiding them. Then I'd be outside the theatre if they needed me and then in the coffee room where they could call me. By the end of the six weeks they'd be working solo but we'd always discuss the cases with them beforehand. They'd tell me what they wanted to do and then they went ahead and did it on their own.
TW. Did you ever have to correct them?
LT. Yes. That was always difficult, the aim being to maintain a balance between constructive criticism, not upsetting the trainee and, most importantly, the consideration of the patient's best care. I'd often stand back and let them make a mistake and when it became obvious to them that they were running into trouble I'd take over. That was a positive way for them to learn, to observe the results of what was happening and then to self-assess why their procedures were wrong. That was the way I was trained, one which I respected rather than to be told bluntly, "You can't do that!"
TW. Did you have more experienced people to train sometimes?
LT. Yes, sometimes we had intermediate people. That was more of a two-way interaction. I often learned from them as well. They might have read a journal article that I hadn't read and we'd discuss that and see how we could fit that into our anaesthetics.

A new life in the UK

TW. Now you are in the UK. Are things very different here in anaesthetics?
LT. Yes! The system is different. The consultants have far higher rank here. Juniors often stand in the corner of the theatre and they are not allowed to do anything.
TW. Have you changed your practice then?
LT. No. I still tell the juniors that the list of theatre cases for the day is their list. They've got to plan it and come and talk to me. At first I have to teach them but once they can do a little bit I allow them to be part of the anaesthetic team.
TW. So how do you manage trying to work and treat juniors your way, in a system that wants to do it another way?
LT. It's difficult. But the juniors appreciate it and provided they don't complain and they benefit and enjoy being on my lists then I can certainly get away with it.
TW. Do you organise formal systems of feedback from the juniors?
LT. No, but because I have a fairly open approach in the theatre and because I don't grade the juniors they will tell me. Also, if I spot an unhappy expression and say "You're not enjoying this are you?" They will tell me. The big thing they like is doing practical procedures and, after discussion, to be able to actually give the anaesthetic. Also I run my tutorials in an interactive way. I've learned that they like to take a case study based on a real experience. I put it on an OHT or use 'Power point' and then we consider how we would handle it. I' ve learned that from them because I don't have a chance to talk to other trainers.

Trainer self-development

TW. How do you keep yourself professionally developed?
LT. First there is Continuing Medical Education (CME) where I need to go to a certain number of conferences and collect CME points and put them in a little book. That's monitored by the Royal College of Anaesthetists.
Then there is an element of continuing professional development which includes visiting centres of excellence where I can speak to other consultants and thereby continue to learn. I have recently spent three months at a centre of excellence learning more about practical chronic pain management. The time was spent in clinic and in theatre, under supervision and this has contributed to my knowledge. This knowledge I can now pass on to my junior colleagues.
Up until now our continuing professional development has not been controlled very closely. However the system is changing with the climate of litigation. We're now going to be expected to keep portfolios including records of the anaesthetic procedures performed. There'll be a meeting too to talk about professional development with the consultants

continued

in the department.
TW You were doing a master's too last time we talked, I think?
LT. The Master's I was doing was in chronic pain management which is a branch of anaesthetics. I hadn't had any training in chronic pain management in South Africa.
TW. So that's another form of professional development ...doing the Master's.
LT. Yes, I'd like at some point, to branch into chronic pain because that takes you back to being able to consult the patient and work with them, planning treatment and seeing the results.
TW. What else can you do to keep up?
LT. By reading journals. There are two British journals and lots of overseas ones. I should really read five a month. Another way I keep up is with our weekly, formal tutorials programme. We are assigned topics. They are almost like lectures now using power point and so on.
TW. Any hot topics in the journals and presentations now?
LT. Yes and they tend to change every six months! Let's see. Anaesthesia for the elderly and for obese patients.
TW. First world topics. Is there anything in the UK that you feel is an improvement on South Africa?
LT. Yes, the chronic pain management and acute post-operative pain management. The working hours are better here for both consultants and juniors.

Feelings about the job

TW. Many of our readers, hopefully the majority, will never have met an anaesthetist before! So, I have to ask you what you like and dislike about your job of sending people to sleep!
LT. At first, I found it quite terrifying... putting a well person to sleep and often making them feel quite ill when they wake up. But now I realise that without anaesthesia, there would be no surgery. It is satisfying to tailor my anaesthetic, to get it just right. To make it right for the surgeon, to wake the patient up without any pain or nausea and thereby make their stay in hospital as pleasant as possible.
TW. Have you ever been anaesthetised yourself?
LT. Yes, but only before I came into the job!

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TRAINING AROUND THE WORLD

Appraisal and Development for Long Term Consultants on ELT Projects.

by Tom Hunter, Team Leader, English Language Teaching Improvement Project, Bangladesh

Introduction

This article explores an appraisal system for long-term consultants working on the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) in Bangladesh. It was the ELTIP Team Leader's responsibility, as line manager to the consultants, to develop an appraisal system. The task was to provide feedback to the employer, making information available for the purposes of references and future job applications, as well as providing feedback on attainment project outputs.

Background

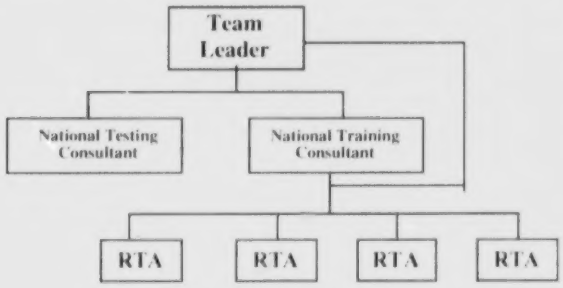
ELTIP is funded jointly by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK government. It is administered jointly by GoB's official curriculum development board, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and the British Council. ELTIP has three main outputs. These are the building of local capacity to:

- write communicative textbooks and teachers' guides for grades 9 to 12 in secondary schools
- in-service train secondary school teachers in keeping with communicative reforms in syllabus and textbooks
- reform the examination system in secondary schools in keeping with communicative reforms in syllabus and textbooks.

Much of the activity towards these outputs is centred on four regional resource centres (RRCs) in the teacher training colleges of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. In its full fruition, ELTIP will also open a further 28 satellite resource centres (SRCs), in the ratio of seven per RRC.

There are 7 expatriate long-term consultancy posts in ELTIP. Three posts are "national" and based in Dhaka. They effectively cover national management of the three project outputs of textbooks, training and testing. One of these national postholders (textbooks) is the designated Team Leader for the project. Four remaining posts are for regional training advisors (RTAs) who act as advisors in training and resource centre management at each of the RRCs. The four RTAs are the only expatriates in their work settings and even with recourse to an effective if occasionally erratic project e-mail communication system, they work in isolation.

ELTIP Line Management



The challenge

Given the context above, the challenge for the team was to design an appraisal system which took into account the special conditions of the consultants. The fact that consultants are already entrusted with great responsibilities pointed to a need for a "responsible" approach to appraisal. Trust was an important element here. Trusting consultants with large amounts of money, expensive equipment and vehicles, extensive resources, not to mention dimensions of human trust, must also lead to trusting consultants to take control of their professional health. In the event, five main reasons were identified for developing an appraisal system:

Five Reasons for a Long-Term Consultant's Appraisal System

None of the reasons for developing an appraisal system has anything to do with judging performance for the purposes of grading. They are all to do with self-motivation and project health. They are:

1 To appraise the performance of consultants so that informed decisions can be made about how best to support their professional development. This is more than just filling gaps in knowledge and skills pertaining to the project. It involves a long-term view, too, which takes into account the dreams and aspirations of the consultants. This also reflects reality in that all projects have a finite time-span and so appraisal for the purposes of belonging to an organisation like, say, the British Council or CfBT etc. is less important than appraisal for defining professional growth for a range of possible future scenarios.
2 To appraise the performance of consultants so that informed decisions can be made in selecting consultants for tasks growing out of organisational development. It is expected that as the organisation develops and changes, opportunities for professional activity in new and hitherto unplanned areas emerges. Appraisal helps to identify those best suited to tackle such activity.
3 To provide data for future references, project bids and letters of recommendation etc. It is likely that we will all be acting as each other's referees for future posts. We can write with more authority if we have appraisal data on which to draw, especially data which has been approved by the consultants in question. For similar reasons, the project management agency asks for this appraisal information.
4 To monitor the achievement of objectives in job plans towards informing relevant stakeholders. This is very much part of project progress reporting.
5 To act as role models of good professional practices for stakeholders and clients

Personal Development

Personal development is inevitable on a project, but it is usually unplanned by the consultant and seldom taken into account by the employer/donor. Often, it is considered that a consultant arrives at post 'packaged' in knowledge, skills, competences etc. which will remain static for the duration and exploited fully. From a professional point of view, this is a great weakness in current project implementation. For understandable reasons, aid donors are reluctant to see their limited resources being spent on the professional and personal development of expatriate consultants, despite the fact that people grow and move in different directions on a project.

However, many consultants would find it both motivating and beneficial to their long term careers (not to mention their project performance) to make explicit any personal development they would like to build in to their work.
While projects may not be able to resource such development for expatriates, there are things that can be done, as follows:

- on-the- job coaching
- mini-project work and new duties
- training course/workshop/conferences
- professional updating

In planning their personal development programs, consultants were given the following advice:

1. Think in terms of personal competences (i.e. skills, behaviour and knowledge and apply SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-bound) criteria to personal objectives.
2. Go for dreams and aspirations!
3. Talk through your personal plan with a colleague.

An Appraisal Procedure

There follows a description of the appraisal procedure with supporting documentation.

A Developmental Process

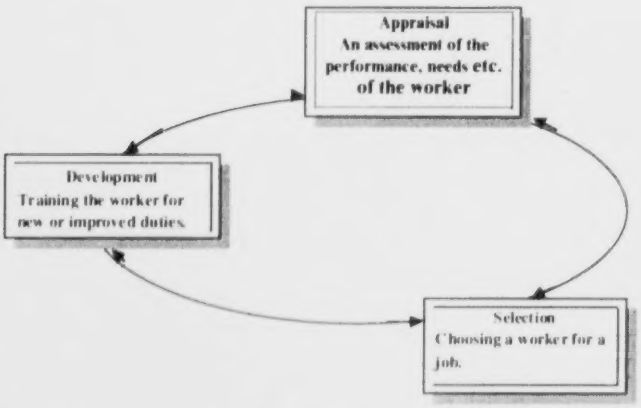
This Appraisal System is ***developmental*** in approach. It addresses two basic questions:

1. Has the consultant achieved her objectives?
2. What can be done to help the consultant achieve her objectives more effectively?

Everything else stems from these two considerations.

continued ►

An Integrated Process


Appraisal
An assessment of the performance, needs etc. of the worker
Development
Training the worker for new or improved duties
Selection
Choosing a worker for a job.

Appraisal should be seen as a function of a process which also involves ***selection*** and ***development***, as follows:
The relationship between ***selection, appraisal*** and ***development*** is dynamic. The terminology employed here corresponds to **Recruiting, Appraising and Developing** in Everard & Morris 1990:78. One can enter the process from any point. Here are some typical permutations in the workplace:

SELECTION → APPRAISAL → DEVELOPMENT
This is typical of the initial phase of employment. A worker is selected (perhaps by interview or by promotion) and after some time her performance is appraised. The results of the appraisal lead to further training/development.

APPRAISAL → DEVELOPMENT → SELECTION
The worker is appraised and recommended for further training (perhaps the employers have a promotion in mind). After "development" the worker is placed in a new job or perhaps competes internally for a new post using the newly learned skills in training.

DEVELOPMENT → SELECTION → APPRAISAL
The worker goes on a course (perhaps even independently of the present employers) and is "selected" for a new job. This could be by interview with new employers or as part of a development policy with the present employers. At some stage in the new job the employee's performance is appraised.

Other permutations are possible and in all cases it can be seen that the process in on-going so that a typical workplace experience might be **selection > appraisal > development > selection > appraisal > selection > development > appraisal > development ...**

The most effective appraisal systems try to capture this dynamic nature by encouraging a continual appraisal approach. One of the most useful ways to do this is to leave as much control of the system as possible to the person appraised and to place the emphasis of the process on the elements that the consultant has direct day-to-day control over.

Process Tenets

In ELT projects, we must therefore begin from the following tenets with regard to the appraisal process:

a. Consultants have control over their own development..

b. We assume that "selection" has already taken place in that everyone is doing a job. However, there is a myriad of "mini-jobs" to be undertaken in projects which people need to grow into/uncover etc. In any thriving team, tasks will be undertaken by consensus, playing not only to peoples' strengths but also to their aspirations. Similarly, a feature of organisational development (OD) is that an organisation will grow in different directions as it progresses and new job descriptions are being thrown up all the time.

c. Appraisal is a ***self***-critical process as well as an opportunity to record achievement.

d. The appraiser plays the roles of mentor and counsellor and very definitely NOT the roles of examiner, grader, rewarder/ punisher or inspector.

e. Consultants are of more use to ELT projects if they are driven by internal factors rather than solely by the external motivators of someone else "rewarding" and someone else "punishing".

Internal Motivators and Fredrick Hertzberg

Hertzberg (1966) identified which factors made people happy in their work and which factors caused the most grievances.

He discovered that satisfaction in work was mostly brought about by internal motivational factors in individuals such as a sense of achievement, the nature of the work being done, responsibility, recognition and advancement.

Dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is caused by what he refers to as "hygiene" factors such as institutional policy, supervision, working conditions, relationships and salary.

- Happiness factors, therefore, are not simply the opposite of unhappiness factors.
- Dissatisfaction comes from the job *environment* (surrounding/context). Satisfaction comes from the job *content*.
- Although an ELT consultant who is satisfied in work may have a high tolerance of dissatisfaction factors, if these factors are too strong then tolerance will fall away quickly.
- The ELT consultant needs to understand what internal factors motivate her while at the same time not assuming too much responsibility for hygiene factors which lie largely outside her control. In a good team, responsibility for hygiene factors is shared.

The appraisal procedure involved each consultant in first self reporting progress according to guidelines (see "Annual Appraisal of Consultant below).

Annual Appraisal of Consultants

Name:.....

Date:.....

1. Self-Appraisal

Personal assessment of the attainment of my job plan objectives:

Personal account of my achievements, including skills and abilities I have acquired/developed during the last year.

Personal assessment of further professional development/training/input to more effectively undertake project duties:

Account of personal agenda of a more motivational kind. (i.e. AProject related@ personal developmental areas I would like to become involved in/competent at, or new duties/experiences I would like to try etc.):

2. Joint Statement

After discussions with your line manager, together agree a short, written statement outlining action to be taken:

Consultant's Signature:.....

Line Manager's Signature:.....

Date:.....

Attach your job-plan to the finished report

The object here is for the person appraised to complete the form outlining achievements, as well as skills and abilities (competences) learned/improved during the report period. There is scope for personal plans.

There followed an interview with the line manager who was guided by the following :

Conducting the Interview

Preparing

By the time the appraisee comes to interview she will have prepared:

a. an overview of progress based on job-plan

b. a list of achievements the appraisee would like to put 'on the record'.

c. a list of competences the appraisee has employed, refined, developed etc. during the appraisal period.

d. growing out of a. b. and c. above, an indication of competences the appraisee would like to develop/work on during the coming year.

Principles

At each above stage, it will be the job of the interviewer to help the appraisee **clarify thinking**. A number of principles should constrain the conduct of the interview:

1. The interviewer should help the appraisee present herself in the **best possible light**.

2. The interviewer should avoid putting words into the appraisee's mouth but should help clarity by **paraphrasing** and **re-wording** what the appraisee says. The appraisee's concurrence on meaning should always be sought.

3. The interviewer should **avoid making judgements** on the appraisee's performance, even when invited to by the appraisee (See box below, 'Role of Mentor').

4. The interviewer should **avoid getting involved in an exchange of views** with the appraisee. The only views that are important for the appraisal are those of the appraisee. The interview should beware of questions like, *'Well, what would you have done/said in this situation/these circumstances?'*

5. The interviewer should avoid coercion, **manipulation and judgementalism**. Slaves are coerced, suckers are manipulated and sinners are judged. This attitudinal message is not lost on the appraisee.

In reality, maintaining an objective detachment is difficult for both appraiser and person appraised. Line managers (see chart "ELTIP Line Management" above) were expected to "do" the appraising and follow the interview principles in a *counselling* role. At such times, however, those appraised are often looking for a more directive approach where the role of *mentor* might be appropriate. The following directive on selection of appropriate interviewing roles was therefore offered:

Role of Mentor

Once the appraisal process is complete (i.e. when the finished document is signed by the line manager and passed on) there is no reason why the interviewer cannot engage in an open 'colleague-to-colleague' discussion of the outcomes and implications of the appraisal. This is the time at which the person appraised might invite the interviewer to give personal opinions on behaviour, activity etc. Alternatively, the person appraised might wish to approach another colleague as a 'mentor' at this stage to share thoughts about the finished document, ask for opinions etc. The point here is that the two roles of 'counsellor' and 'mentor' must be separated from each other in the appraisal process.

Competences

Central to the whole process has been the notion of a set of competences which relate to the work of ELT consultants. The list we used is reproduced below. It will be noted that the list attempts to encompass the "complete" job-world of the consultant.

continued ➔

Competences of the ELT Consultant

The term Competence is used in management appraisal literature to refer to skills and abilities. A competence should be observable but it is possible to talk about *developing* competences or *emerging* competences when initial awareness/ attitude/understanding pointing to an embryonic competence, manifests itself. Just as we can talk about inter-language we can also talk about inter-competence.

In ELTIP, competences are employed in a number of contexts. These include:

the training room
the resource room
the office
the visit to government/administrative stakeholders
the project workshop
the public relations event
the greater-project milieu

The consultant plays different roles in each context, which require different competences. Some competences assume greater importance with certain roles.

Let us take a concrete example. An ELT consultant needs to exhibit appropriate leadership skills as well as being good at delegating, so we can say that two consultant competences are **Leadership** and **Delegation**. In the training room, the consultant might sometimes assume the role of facilitator, in which case a more inclusive form of leadership is required which is undominating and consultative. In the same way, the consultant may frequently offer opportunities for the delegation of power and authority as a facilitator and must know how to do this and what the effect on people is.

Contrast this with the context of the visit to stakeholders where the consultant probably has to stamp authority for the sake of project progress. There may, for example, be time constraints or decisions need to be made quickly and so the role of facilitator becomes less appropriate and the role of, say, output driver is more effective. At such times, a tendency to delegate power and authority could be counter productive and the consultant could find herself taking, even insisting on taking, responsibility for certain actions. This is especially true when an emergency requires action.

We can see, then, that having competence in Leadership and in Delegation also means knowing what is **appropriate** for certain **roles** in specific **contexts**. This takes on an even greater complexity in a **cross-cultural setting.**

Service List of Competences

The following list is NOT designed to be prescriptive or used as a checklist to tick off. It is designed to give some structure to your thinking in preparation for your appraisal. Not all competences will be important (or even relevant). Let the competences "speak" to you. If one leaps out of the page as significant in your ELT experiences, then you will find it useful to follow up. Much overlap between competences will be noted. Some competences fall easily into the area of "learned" skills and abilities, while others are firmly in the field of individual personality. Still others hang tantalisingly between the two, offering individual challenges to "development".

Typically, an ELT consultant engaged in development project work might employ the following competences:

adaptability
The ability to change plans/direction according to changing circumstances. To make things smooth for others. To control emotions and reactions towards others in moments of crisis and rapid change. Accommodation and modification are key concepts in this competence.

active listening
The ability to listen actively is a valuable counselling tool. It is a learnt skill involving other counselling techniques such as empathising and concretising. It involves "emptying one's head" of pre-judgement and actively assisting one's interlocutor.

attention to detail
The ability to move from global visioning to nitty-gritty in seconds. Being concerned with the impact of training on rural areas and the lack of toilet disinfectant in the same breath!

commitment
Understanding and demonstrating the principles and aims of the project. Being a good role model. Being a good colleague. Showing dedication.

communication
The ability to get one's ideas across verbally and textually as well as to belong to a system of contacts. This also involves interpersonal skills. In ELT it also involves skill in communicating cross-culturally (This is not necessarily a matter of local language competence, but also a matter of cultural sensitivity. The two should be, but often are not, the same thing). Advising, informing, notifying, disclosing and proclaiming are all features of this competence.

compliance
The skill of belonging to a larger team with deadlines, rules, and principles. Handing in things on time. Making it to meetings etc. Following instructions. Compliance doesn't mean blindly following orders but it does mean unselfishly blending one's own agenda with that of the "greater good". The ability to monitor one's attitudes towards authority, cultural difference and weaker, less-gifted colleagues. Willingness and flexibility are key features.

creativity
This is the ability to think laterally, generate news ideas, practices etc. It might also involve a strong sense of design. It also involves physical skill (e.g. art work, desk-top publishing etc). Imagination, ingenuity, inventiveness and originality are all important features.

decisiveness
The ability to take decisions and act assertively when appropriate. The ability to be clear about decisions and not to cloud issues or fudge decisions. The ability to be definite, resolute and positive is key.

delegation
The ability to delegate work. The skill of arriving democratically at a definition of workloads. Creating consensus on workloads. The ability to identify other people's strengths and work to them. The ability to consult. The ability to relinquish power and let others do jobs you like doing yourself. The ability to trust. The ability to be patient. Authorising and assigning are important abilities. The use of committees is a key skill. This competence is also about knowing when NOT to delegate. Knowing ultimately who "carries the can" and being aware of *responsibilities* as well as *rights* within an organisation.

development of others
In ELT, this complex area can be divided into two sections: one dealing with skills as a developer of teachers (training) and the other as a developer of project staff (staff development). This competence is deserving of a whole appraisal system of its own and can be sub-divided many times.

energy
The ability to sustain levels of output conducive to the needs of the project. Energy levels differ from individual to individual but the consultant should ask herself if present manifested levels of output are appropriate to the job or typical of the individual. Application and devotion are key.

impact
The ability to make an impression. This involves interpersonal skill as well as a well-developed sense of "presence" It also involves a high degree of self-awareness (the way others see one). Effect and influence are key notions.

independence
The ability to operate alone. The ability to get on with things. The ability to be autonomous, self-reliant and unconstrained. This involves not looking for external "pats on the back" but finding internal means of drive.

initiative
The ability to take the lead when necessary. The ability to seek out opportunities. The tendency *not* to wait to be "told" to do things. Ambition, drive and enterprise are often associated with this competence.

innovativeness
The ability to be a pioneer. Not to be afraid to try things out, pilot things and, if necessary, to scrap or modify them. Resourcefulness and originality are key concepts in this competence.

integrity
The ability to maintain a public position honestly and honourably. This involves a number of things such as the ability to be even handed and just, to avoid backbiting and gossip, to "manage" personal enmities, to avoid favouritism, not to allow personal ambition or bias to infect project behaviour. *Integrity* is closely associated with *tolerance*. In ELTIP, integrity is connected to a "principled" approach to implementation.

judgement
The ability to analyse problems and pinpoint the main issues distinguishing them from background "noise". To act upon evidence and information rationally and with clarity. To balance options and to temper decisions according to the measure of the balance.

monitoring
The skill of critically observing project activity towards providing feedback for improvement. In ELTIP this means two kinds of competence: monitoring of teaching practice and monitoring of staff activity. In both cases, skills of counselling, facilitation and non-judgementalism are paramount, while the ability to provide unambiguous feedback is also important. Observing, regulating and supervising are all key skills in monitoring.

motivation
The ability to "self-start". To be aware of and draw upon internal motivational resources. The ability to create or seek out external factors which contribute to motivational forces in oneself. The ability to analyse and identify motivational forces in others and to create a motivating working environment accordingly. The ability to define limitations to ones motivating "powers". Activating, encouraging, prompting, influencing, inspiring and stimulating are all facets of motivating.

persuasiveness
The ability to win people over. This might initially involve the skill of intellectualising or of being a good researcher. It involves interpersonal and leadership skills, as well as assertiveness. Skills of logical analysis may combine with flair and theatrics or with quiet one-to-one effectiveness. Being able to compel and convince are key skills.

planning
The ability to look ahead, to define and manage risks and assumptions. The ability to define goals, purposes, outputs and resources. The ability to marshal resources, and to articulate proposals verbally and textually. The ability to engage a "whole project" approach to planning i.e. to fit in with other elements of the project. Conceptualising and designing strategies are key elements.

presentation
The skills involved in selling oneself and in selling ones ideas! In short, all of the abilities associated with going public. Contexts could range from lecture rooms to newspaper articles. Demonstrating, exhibiting, informing, displaying and showing are key concepts.

problem-analysis
The ability to look at an issue from a number of sides. The ability to be objective and detached (i.e. not to personalise problems.) The abilities to examine, enquire and investigate are also key.

resilience
The ability to "bounce back". In cross-cultural project work this often means picking oneself up after external and internal forces seem to mitigate against one's success and achievements. The inner strength to wait, control one's

continued ➔

emotions with colleagues and to co-operate rather than conflict. Being resilient is often associated with being irrepressible and tenacious.

sensitivity
The ability to put oneself in the other person's shoes. In ELTIP this mans being both culturally sensitive and being sensitive to oganisational development and change (in particular, its effects on human beings). The ability to control one's frustrations, especially with colleagues. It might mean exercising control over one's choice of language or something as simple as monitoring one's dress. Showing sympathy and understanding along with displays of insight and perception may accompany this competence. Sensitive people are usually highly self-aware and so
"awareness" generally becomes a central concern in developing sensitivity.

team-building
The ability to build and sustain teams. This involves an awareness of team roles, motivational factors, characteristics of effective teams and strategies for building teams. The ability to resolve conflicts. It also involves being aware of how teams within teams should operate as well as an awareness of rights and responsibilities within an organisation.

team-playing
The ability to work in a team. This involves understanding the nature of role-playing in teams as well as an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a team approach to management.. The ability to be inclusive. The tendency not to engage in point-scoring. The ability to be generous with colleagues. The tendency not to create "them and us" situations. The ability to monitor one's own attitudes in favour of a team approach. This would include the necessity to keep personal ambition, foibles, insecurities, hostilities and self-promotion out of team business. It also involves the skills to help team members who DO exhibit such attitudes.

tenacity
The ability to stick at something to the end. The ability to know when to be pushy while demonstrating *sensitivity* and *integrity*. Tenacity is stronger than *persuasiveness* and *resilience*. Determination, perseverance and steadfastness are key elements in this competence.

tolerance
The ability to value weaker and less gifted colleagues. The ability to be non-judgmental, to avoid coercion and manipulation of colleagues. The ability to demonstrate an appreciation of cultural differences in a relativist way. Being broad-minded, open-minded and moderate are also key.

vision
The ability to see the bigger picture and to articulate it. The ability to metaphorise, symbolise and paraphrase project activity. This would also involve the ability to inspire. Having foresight, prescience and discernment are often features of this competence, too.

*(Adapted from a service list of competences in Watling, B. (1995) **The Appraisal Checklist**. The Institute of Management Foundation: Pitman)*

Consultants' Observations of the Appraisal Process

1 Participating consultants found the emphasis on their own development refreshing although line managers were often taken aback by the capacity of consultants to be very hard on themselves. This tended to present an unbalanced view of the consultants' progress and vindicates the emphasis on persuading consultants to "present themselves in the best possible light."

2 Contrary to pre-appraisal fears of a whitewash effect on feedback, the system very quickly opened up weak areas and under-developed areas of expertise in consultants. **These areas were, however, exclusively uncovered by the consultants themselves**. This contrasts with more traditional forms of appraisal where the candidate is not so much "appraised" as "abraded".

3 Line managers (interviewers) did not particularly find the counselling role difficult, but it would help to provide some form of awareness raising/training at regular intervals. It was also felt that the system could be taken over by the consultants themselves – all acting as each other's interviewers. This would certainly add to the sense of consultant ownership.

4 Occasionally, it was difficult not to become involved in a mentoring role during the interview. There is the problem of consultants' expectations and a (reported) need for occasional "robust" feedback on performance – for whatever reasons. The "reasons" need to be explored more fully and may have more to do with the consultant's state of mind at the time of appraisal or perceived levels of confidence or, indeed, a cry for help.

5 Trust among colleagues is deeply valued.

6 Among some colleagues there was a tendency to "gloss" the list of competences as a blanket set of abilities that one might have a reasonable "all-round" expertise in. It was necessary to emphasise the fluidity of competences and the need to draw on certain ones in certain conditions. This emphasis was best achieved by focusing on consultants' real strengths and talents during the interview.

Conclusion

Appraisal, selection and development are part of an interdependent, dynamic process. This process can further professional effectiveness among consultants by focusing on self-development and self-direction among those appraised. In the often remote world of the ELT project, this article recommends a counselling approach to appraisal where the person appraised is in control of the process, as outlined above.

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WHO READS THE TEACHER TRAINER?

Here is a list of sample subscribers:

The Central Institute for In-Service Teacher Training, Bulgaria

CREFOC, Tunisia

Buskerud College, Ringerike, Norway

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Language Schools in Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary

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A TRAINER LIKE ME...

We used to have a column called "Meet a Colleague" which starred teacher trainers from Greece, USA, The Soviet Union (as was), Hungary and Argentina. To update this column and to get a little deeper into interesting issues, we now have the following questionnaire, this time filled in by a Turkish teacher trainer:

1. What's your name?
Hi. I'm Deniz Kurtoglu Eken.

2. How did you become a teacher trainer?
Not an easy question to answer. Looking back, though, one thing I remember very well is that I very much wanted to become a teacher trainer. I loved the type of work involved in teacher training, especially the idea of doing sessions and working with teachers on classroom observations. I think I was greatly influenced by two people in particular: my elder sister, Nur Kurtoglu Hooton, who was then working as a teacher trainer at METU in Ankara (now at Aston University, LSU) and one of my MA professors, Charles Parish at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (now retired). I admired both (still do!) for their enthusiasm and commitment to the work they did, but more so for their communication with teachers and their genuine interest in the teachers' development. I think I was also influenced by some teaching colleagues at Bilkent University School of English Language (BUSEL) who liked my teaching ideas and said I'd make a good trainer. Although I wasn't a teacher trainer as such, a lot of peers used to come to me for ideas, discuss their lessons, ask for suggestions, etc. The more this happened, the stronger my belief got that I could probably become a trainer myself. The school knew about my interest in training and advised me to take some time to sit in on training sessions and to give some workshops to teachers, and so I did. In 1992, I applied to the post of teacher trainer and got accepted. My name changed from "teacher" to "teacher trainer", but in a sense I still wasn't a teacher trainer. Looking back, I think I actually *became* a trainer after several years in the training profession.

3. What's your setting now?
I work as Academic Advisor and Teacher Trainer at BUSEL and as Part-time Lecturer on a pre-service MA course at the Graduate School of Education. I'm involved in training and supervisory work with different groups of teachers and different specialist groups within the school. I'll cheat a little bit here and also mention some different things I've been involved in over the years. I've worked as a course tutor on some UCLES courses (COTE, CTEFLA, DOTE, DTEFLA), run in-house workshops and mini-courses for teachers and specialist groups, designed and run the BUSEL Trainer Training Course, been involved in teacher recruitment and various institutional research projects. Although I've worked in Bilkent University basically all my life, I've also been involved in many national training events and some international ones.

4. What do you enjoy about your job?
It's great to be asked this question since there's a lot I enjoy

continued ►

about my job – or rather *have enjoyed*. I love working with teachers, both in groups and one-to-one, and I've really enjoyed the opportunity to work with different groups and individuals over the years. I love giving sessions and presentations; for me, this is like "being on stage" (I've always wanted to be a "stage" person!). I find the whole area of classroom observation absolutely fascinating and I love working with teachers on observations. I love the creativity involved in my work; I'm never satisfied with what I know or do and I like challenging myself to create "original" ideas. I love doing research related to different aspects of training. Most of all, though, I treasure the relationships I've built both at a professional and personal level with different teacher and trainer colleagues over the years and I feel I wouldn't have been able to do so as well, had it not been for all my training work both at Bilkent and outside.

5. What do you need from the groups of teachers you work with?
A commitment to teaching and to self-development; loving the work they do; loving the students and really caring for them as learners and individuals; being receptive and open to others and their ideas; reflecting on the work they do; challenging themselves to learn more, to do things better even if what they're doing is "good".

6. Is there any area you feel guilty not knowing more about?
One of the most challenging things about teacher training is that you're expected to know about everything, so in a sense you've got not choice. But this expectation is also very helpful because it challenges you to learn more and more – you can't stop. This is how I feel about my knowledge. There are some areas where I could call myself a near expert, some I feel I know enough about, and others that I feel I know little about. The thing is, though, even if you don't know much about an area, you learn about it to be able to do it. Over the years, I've taken up many opportunities to do "new" sessions i.e. areas I hadn't given input on before, thus challenging myself to learn about these areas as well. Although it's not an area as such, I think in terms of guilt, I actually feel guilty about not having been a full-time teacher for 9 years now. Although, I've managed to keep some teaching contact, this has unfortunately not been more than 5 hours a week.

7. Are there any other questions you'd like to put to yourself and to other trainers who star in this column?
Loads, but unfortunately space allows for one. It's something that I keep asking myself all the time – or rather a concern that one day I might run out of ideas, especially "creative" and "original" ones and what I could actually do to prevent this from happening. Conceptually, it's like the rabbit in the old "Energizer" commercial: "Nothing outlasts the Energizer! It keeps going and going and going." Will *I* be able to keep going and going and going? I'm always curious to learn about whether other trainers share similar concerns or maybe some others.

8. Can you provide a photo of yourself?
I thought a cheerful one would be nice and hence the decision not to send in a passport photo.

(If you'd like to respond to the challenge of answering the questions above in an interesting way that doesn't run over 800 words, please send in your answers to the Editor!)

Training Mistakes

I tried to start this new column off myself some years ago (See "Pair and groupwork, confessions of ignorance" in TTT Volume nine, number one), but nobody else joined in! Recently there has been a slight climate change however and it seems that some trainers ARE prepared to talk about the odd bungle in public. Here's a bunglette from Mario Escobar in Peru.

"Hello,

This mistake may seem silly but let's see what you think of it. While doing an academic presentation for a group of around 80 trainees, I approached a teacher trainee who seemed to be pregnant and commented on the "fact". Much to my surprise she said she wasn't pregnant. Of course I apologised and tried not to embarrass her further. She said she was not offended but she could have been. I had had no intention of being rude. On the contrary I had just wanted to make a friendly remark.

I don't mind you printing my mistake as I believe that relating experiences like mine may help other colleagues to be more careful. For trainees are sometimes unwillingly affected by the person in charge."

Here's another, longer report of a training problem from Bonnie Lee La Madeleine

"I work at an educational research facility for Japanese Teachers in Japan. This Centre is also responsible for ALL the professional development and training these teachers will receive over the course of their career. Sad to say, the teachers receive in total only 24 development days for their entire career and of that only 7 of those are targeted on their subject. Most of the training they receive concerns issues of student and teacher socialisation.

The seminars I help facilitate are the subject training seminars for English teachers, and we recently executed the second half of these seminars for New, 5 and 10 year experienced teachers. The sessions we led in the spring included workshops on learning styles and lesson planning strategies for a variety of learning styles. They were successful and, according to participant feedback, useful. Most asked us to provide more ideas on planning and strategies for the classroom.

In July, one of our team members left and a new one came into the group. He arrived with new ideas about what these teachers need to know and was reluctant to follow the suggestions of our team leader. (The new member believed that the main goal of English Education in Japan is to produce people who can speak English, and he is wrong—the purpose is to develop diligence and discipline.) So he planned a seminar that introduced four activities, done by four groups in 50 minutes. The team accepted it because it sounded like a good way to work in task-based lesson planning. However, many of the participating teachers commented that that session lacked both focus and clear objectives. The new team member also felt that the session failed.

After this first failure, I was asked by the team leader to find a way to reshape that workshop into something more in line with our goals. I was not given any clear direction as to what to do. I spoke with the new team member about what he wanted to do to make this session work. He wanted to throw it all way and start on a new session on questioning strategies. I volunteered to do some research for him and see what might turn up. But then the two other team members asked me to reshape the original plan to develop critical thinking strategies.

Instead of four activities, we pared it down to two. The objectives we set were to: 1) provide two activities for the classroom, 2) improve teachers' creative and critical thinking skills with the activities, and 3) have the teachers think about strategy when given a problem. It was to be a learner centred workshop that would in turn, hopefully, start the teachers talking about the kinds of problems that might come up if they were to try this activity with their students. We presented the schedule to the new member of the team and went over it in detail with him. He re-typed the outline and re-created the worksheet for the seminar to help him understand it better. He also made some other changes. The workshop flopped again.

I think the biggest problem we are having is in the planning team — setting clear goals that are communicated clearly to everyone. The other problems centre on egos and an unwillingness to know or understand each other's point of view and the real and perceived needs of our participants.

In case you are concerned about the people on my team and how they might feel about having our trials published, I asked all the team members if they were cool with this. They all said that it was fine, especially since I did not name any names.

The fact that communication has improved in that team and that egos have gone on holiday following that series of failures has helped considerably. You have the permission of the group to publicly display our growing pains!

Thank you Mario and Lee for restarting this column.

(Readers, please feel free to write in with SUCCINCT accounts of your blunders, goofs and misdemeanours!)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column picks out publications which are relevant or interesting to modern language teacher trainers and swiftly describes them so that you can gauge if they are interesting enough to look at or buy.

Teacher induction: the way ahead by Les Tickle (2000) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-20178-4. Written for teacher educators and state school-based mentors, drawing on research and practical experiences, the author considers how induction can best be conceptualised, designed and provided. Instructive and fairly radical.

Theory in language teacher education Eds H. Trappes-Lomax & I. McGrath (1999) Longman ISBN 0-582-42961-7. 15 papers given at the 5th IALS symposium for LT educators and considering questions such as: do we all mean the same thing by 'theory', who makes/owns it, how does it relate to practice, what theories do we need. Unusual and useful topic.

The intuitive practitioner Ed T. Atkinson & G. Claxton (2000) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-20362-0. A book about the value of NOT always knowing what we are doing! 15 articles explore the relationship between reason and intuition in professional (teaching, medical and business) practice. A reconceptualisation and rehabilitation of Schon and an antidote to the many simplistic interpretations of Schon.

Behaviour in schools by Louise Porter (2000) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-20668-9. An overview of major theories of behaviour management in primary and secondary schools illustrated with detailed case studies. Part One has chapters on limit-setting approaches, applied behaviour analysis, cognitive behaviourism, neo -Adlerism, humanism, choice and system theories. Part Two deals with motivating students, Part Three with parents and formulating discipline policies.

In your hands by Jane Revell & Susan Norman (1997) ISBN 1-901564-00-2. Saffire Press. For the competent EFL teacher, this book lays out the basics of NLP clearly and concisely, using stories and guided fantasies (there's a tape), and helps you, at the same time, to make connections between NLP, teaching and life. Lots of interesting activities, quotes and comments from the authors. Very enjoyable.

Handing over by Jane Revell and Susan Norman (1999) Saffire Press ISBN 1-901564-02-9. A companion volume to *In your hands*, this book applies the concepts of NLP to the EFL classroom. Clearly described activities, contents page at the back. A good way to learn about NLP with your students.

Teaching for success by Mark Fletcher (2000) English Experience ISBN 1-898295-62X. An interactive A4 book described by the author as "brain friendly" and designed to discuss matters such as learning, memory, the interface between neuro-science and education in an interesting and informative way. Lots of visuals and subheadings.

Learning through a foreign language, ed. John Masih (1999) CILT ISBN 1-902031-68-7. A collection of 13 papers from an international conference on ways of structuring curricula which integrate content and language learning. This is one of very few books, as yet, on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and so is very welcome.

continued ►

500 computing tips for teachers and lecturers by P. Race and S. McDowell (1999) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-3150-4. Very basic practical advice in recipe style on choosing a computer, getting started with software, IT in the classroom and miscellany such as virus, security and scanners.

Oxford guide to British and American culture. OUP (1999) ISBN 0-19-431332-8. Over 10,000 alphabetical entries on things like the AA, feminism and Frank Zappa plus longer articles on topics such as education and humour, maps and photos. For intermediate learners of English onwards.

People skills for young adults by Marianna Csóti (2000) Jessica Kingsley ISBN 1-85302-716-2. A course in social skills training for students aged 16+. Particularly appropriate for those with mild learning difficulties. Comprises a series of lessons with teacher notes, role plays, tasks and scenarios on, e.g., making friends, self-confidence, and assertiveness. Not designed for ESL/EFL so you will have to adapt it.

The internet by Scott Windeatt et al. (2000) OUP ISBN 0-19-4372235. Some 50 TESOL classroom activities for practising core internet skills such as searching the Web, evaluating Web pages, sending e-mail, and for improving vocabulary, grammar and language skills via the internet. The book has a Website too with downloadable worksheets, regular updates to the ideas in the book and opportunities for feedback.

How to be an online tutor by Julia Duggleby (2000) Gower ISBN 0-566-08247-0. The author has been both student and tutor on a 'learning to teach online' course and aims to help translate what is already done in terms of training and facilitating learning into an online environment. Very clear, sensible and non-technical.

Building a better team by Peter Moxon (1993) Gower ISBN 0-566-08007-9. A practical handbook for native speaking English business managers and facilitators wanting to set up and run team- building programmes with working teams. Discussions of how groups develop, how trust and openness can be encouraged and likely problems, coupled with practical exercises for use with the teams themselves.

Teaching adult second language learners by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom (1999) CUP ISBN 0-521-649900. This book addresses the special needs of adults studying English, particularly those who have immigrated to English speaking countries. Divided into three sections discussing (1) assessment, placement and the organisation of courses and lessons, (2) techniques for building community in the classroom, and (3) activities by topic, e.g., food, clothing and work.

Dictionary of language testing by Alan Davies et al. (1999) UCLES ISBN 0-521-658764. Over 600 alphabetical entries designed to make language testing more transparent. Further reading references, extensive cross-referencing. If you want to get a quick definition of 'construct validity', 'path analysis' or 'true/false item', this is the dictionary for you!

Success in English teaching by Paul Davies and Eric Pearse (2000) OUP ISBN 0-19-442171-6. Aims to offer inexperienced EFL teachers at secondary level and above realistic ways of achieving success even with large classes and few resources. This is not a recipe book of classroom activities but instead discusses theoretical principles and considers planning, materials, evaluation and professional development in normal prose. Each chapter finishes with a summary and a project for the reader. Very mainstream.

New perspectives on teaching and learning modern languages Ed. Simon Green (2000) Multilingual Matters ISBN 1-85359-471-7. Ten contributions in an A5 book from the UK and Ireland on what the current situation is for modern language teaching and learning, what it could be by 2005 and how we could get there.

Staff Educational Development Association (SEDA) Publications. SEDA offers events, membership services and professional development accreditation for all staff in higher education in the UK. Amongst other publications, it also offers a series of practical papers of interest to those working in higher education. Examples are: Getting to grips with assessment, Academic tutoring, Effective peer tutoring, Promoting peer assisted learning and Staff development in action. The papers are A4 and spiral bound. Different publications in this series include reading references, OHP templates, practical tips, workshop activities and are all very clearly laid out.

Learning to teach by Gill Nicholls (1999) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-2865-1. A handbook for trainee primary and secondary school teachers in the UK. (So chapters on the National Curriculum and the inspection process may be irrelevant to you.) The text often uses 'the trainee teacher', 'their students', 'their mentors' rather than 'you' or 'your' so often distancing a trainee reader. But useful chapters on childrens' learning, class management, working with parents and continuing professional development.

The language teacher's voice by Alan Maley (2000) Macmillan Heinemann ISBN 0-333-91650-6. Hard to believe that after all these years this is the first and only book out on the ELT teacher's voice and how to use it for full effect in the classroom and for professional development. But it's true! Full of inspiring quotations, practical exercises for teachers and students and ending with an interesting annotated bibliography and useful addresses. (See facing page)

Children learning English by Jayne Moon (2000) Macmillan Heinemann ISBN 0-435-24096X. Mostly concerned with children from 6-12 years of age, this prize winning book encourages teachers to learn from children, observing what they do and say and talking to them as people rather than as pupils. It's not aimed at beginning teachers. Text subdivisions are: children as language learners, pupils' attitudes to English, differences between children, managing learning, interaction and support, planning, creating, adapting and evaluating activities, using a cross-curricular approach, resources, assessment and learning to learn. Discussion, discovery activities and real life examples included. (See facing page)

Booklet series

The professional development collection from NCELTR, Macquarie University, continues its useful series of A5 booklets with: Using new technology in the classroom ISBN 1-86408-559-2. Teaching disparate learning groups ISBN 1-86408-493-6. Developing critical literacy ISBN 1-86408-494-4. Monitoring learner progress ISBN 1-86408-495-2. All by K. Brown (1990). All draw on recent research projects in an Australian adult ESL context. All note, in point form, the project findings, relevant literature and then suggest implications for classroom practice so they are very swift but satisfying summaries.

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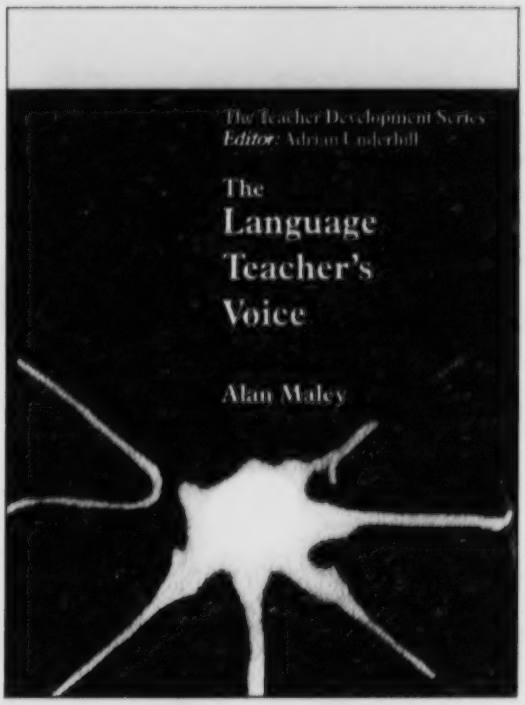

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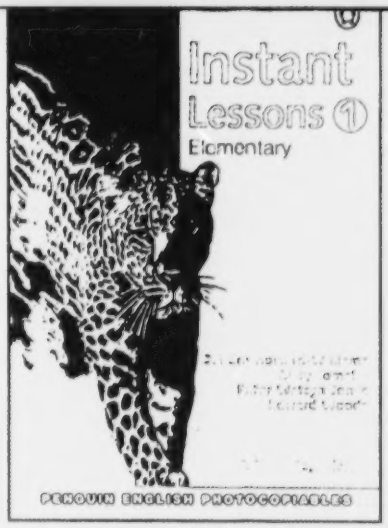

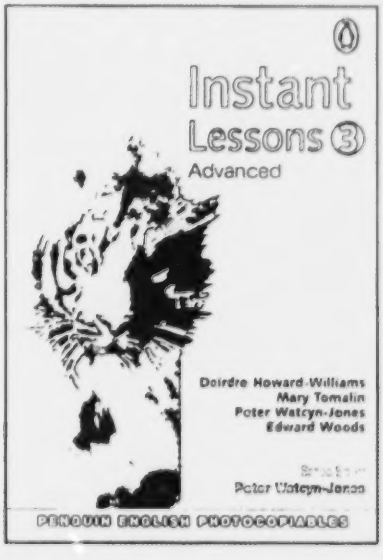

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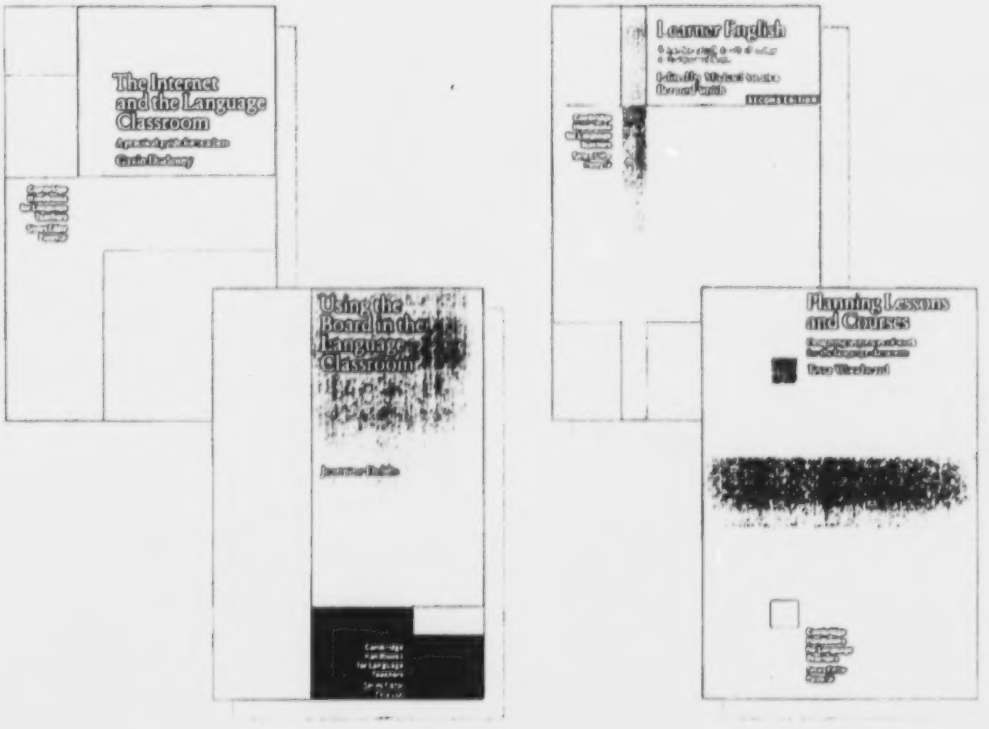
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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

Session report

Investigating learning Andrew Morris 3

Becoming a teacher educator Jo Durham 4

Subscriptions information 5

Process options

Plenary speaker techniques Mario Rinvolucri 8

Trainee voices and current research

Voices in cross-cultural contact A.J.Meier 11

People who train people

Robin White, florist trainer 15

Just for interest Beate Hermelin 17

Working with multiple intelligence theory in the training of language teachers Linda Taylor 18

A Trainer Like Me Mary Jane Abrahams 22

Publications received 23

Editorial

Welcome to the summer issue of 2001!

As I write this, my sister-in-law and I are developing a beautiful new web site for The Teacher Trainer journal. We hope it will be ready well before you hold this issue in your hands. As well as making sure you can get up-to-date information on subscribing, contributing an article and advertising in the journal, we will be building an archive of excellent articles from the early issues of the magazine and lists of books and web sites of use to trainers too. So come to www.tttjournal.co.uk and check us out! Of course, if you are more of a paper, fax and phone person, all our normal channels are still open.

In this issue, we have, as usual, some lively articles!

Andrew Morris (P3) takes us back to essentials: teachers considering our own learning and making the link between this and our current teaching style.

Jo Durham (P4) reads her past journals and other people's accounts too to learn more about the transition from language teacher to teacher educator.

Mario Rinvolucri (P11) has come up with an eight- fold classification of plenary speaker styles.

Ardith Meier (P11) interviewed ten of her international MA students to find out what they thought about academic life in the USA. Their replies reveal a lot about both their home and US culture.

The People Who Train People column is the one most often mentioned as a favourite by readers, so it is back this issue with a very forthright trainer of florists (P 15) and Mary JAne Abrahams jions us (P22) in A Trainer Like Me.

Beate Hermelin (P17) tells us about her book on "idiots savants" in the Just for Interest column.

Linda Taylor details her use of Multiple Intelligence Theory on an MA TESOL module (P18).

As usual, the Publications Received column draws swift verbal pictures of the latest books so you can gauge whether they are interesting enough to read or buy.

Hope you enjoy this issue and see you on the new web-site!

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward

The Editor

Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft in on paper typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as a Microsoft Word (98 or lower) or as an ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in **upper and lower case throughout**. Finally, please give an accurate word count. We try to publish your article within about five issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer. It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication. We look forward to reading your article!

SESSION REPORT

Investigating Learning

by Andrew Morris, English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), Bangladesh

Introduction

It is only when I learnt about learning that I really began to understand teaching. When I began to reflect on and examine my own experience as a learner, whether at school or in later life, I finally started to grasp what elements I needed to include in my own teaching, if, that is, I felt I wanted others to learn as I had done.

Everything starts with learning, and yet so much of our literature has revolved exclusively around teaching: what the teacher does, or should be doing.

In my recent work as a teacher trainer, in the very traditional educational context of Bangladesh, I realised I was equally guilty of propagating this slightly misguided philosophy. It was not enough simply to try to pass on a set of approaches, methods and techniques. While there may often be persuasive intellectual arguments for adopting a new set of techniques, teachers are and should be free to reject any ideas suggested by the trainer, unless they accord with their own personal experience.

I have come to think, then, that what is often lacking as a training course begins is an explicit link between the teachers' own experience of learning and their teaching. It is only when we began to make this clear in our own training that my colleagues and I feel we were really able to communicate with the trainees.

There was plenty of opportunity for reflection in our sessions – ample chance to discuss present practices and to reassess them in the light of new ideas – so we could not be accused of imposing alien concepts without first investigating current beliefs. But perhaps we did not dig deep enough into those values, attitudes and beliefs. We discussed attitudes to teaching language, to communication, to the need for a more interactive classroom, but all of these were in some sense ideas *outside* the teachers – intellectual concepts to be played around with.

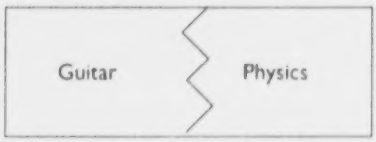
What we needed, I realised, was something which encouraged teachers to look deeply not into their ideas but into their own *lives*. Perhaps it was there that their values, attitudes and beliefs had sprung from – from the heart rather than the head. It was only by encouraging the teachers to get *inside* themselves and their experience that real change in attitude could take place. Teachers can deny and reject intellectual ideas for a number of reasons – they may find it much easier to accept the lessons of their own personal experience.

Exploring learning

We devised a training session which would, we hoped, be able to bring out some of these issues.

The steps were as follows:

1. I asked teachers to write, on a small piece of paper, something they had enjoyed learning at any time in the distant or recent past, and something they had not enjoyed learning. As a personal example I drew the following on the board:



2. The trainees then mingled with others in the room, finding out what they had written, and why. I stressed that it was not a chance to talk about why they enjoyed playing the piano, or speaking English, but why they had enjoyed *learning* these things.

3. In groups back at their tables, the trainees were then told to make a list identifying the elements they'd talked about which had characterised the positive learning experiences, and those which had characterised the negative learning experiences.

4. The lists were then fed back on to the board, in three columns, as illustrated below. At this stage however, I did not give each column a title.

• I wanted to learn • The subject was interesting for me • There was a good atmosphere in the class I enjoyed the subject • The subject had practical uses for me • The lessons were at the right level for me • I was never bored	• I got plenty of practice. • I learnt by doing • I was able to learn from others in the class • I had the chance to try ideas out. • I could experiment with what it said in the book.	• I had a good teacher • My teacher encouraged me • My teacher gave me praise. • She found exercises at the right level • She corrected me when I was going wrong • She never became impatient with me

5. Having gathered all the responses on to the whiteboard, I then asked the groups to come up with a title for each column.

6. Many groups came up with different and interesting titles. One suggested "before, during and after". However, another group suggested the catchy "Motivation, *continued* ►

Participation and Facilitation", which later won the approval of the class as a whole.

7. These were, I suggested, excellent indicators of what helps make learning successful:

- *We learn best when we are motivated and interested*
- *We learn by actually participating and doing something with the subject matter*
- *We learn best with the right sort of help from a good teacher*

7. To conclude, we realised, some for the first time, that without these conditions being in place, *unless our students were engaged*, their chances of learning were greatly reduced.

8. The next stage was to apply these theories to the course book used in Bangladeshi schools, and to look at a certain chapter, exploring ways to make the text more motivating, how to increase participation, and what the role of the teacher should be. Teachers suggested bringing in pictures to make the text come alive, creating opportunities for pairwork in asking and answering about the text, and even personalising the text by asking and answering questions about their students' own lives. It was enjoyable to see them suggesting a role as active monitors while their students engaged in the activities.

Conclusions

It is my contention here that, had we simply discussed the fact that motivation, participation and facilitation were "good things", we may well have all assented intellectually. The results might have been short-lived however – just another interesting idea, to be considered and then gradually forgotten.

However, the investigation of teachers' own experience as learners brought them face to face with their own concrete experience. They saw that these experiences could be transferred to their own classroom, and that, conversely, the absence of these characteristics might well militate against any learning taking place at all. For many of them it was the first time they had ever analysed what had helped them learn, as educational culture here, as in many countries, often discourages such introspection. The teacher teaches, and the students learn automatically. Or not. Those who don't are dismissed as 'weak'.

It would be irresponsible to claim that this would or should lead to a transformation of teaching overnight. There is, of course, a whole panoply of issues to be considered, and a range of methods and techniques to which teachers need access if they are to implement a more interactive approach. These will come later. What I am arguing here is that the first seeds of change can be planted by asking ourselves and our trainees to confront our own experience not only as teachers but as learners. It is only by reaching deep into our memories and experiences that the basic question of how we learn can be investigated. Once that is established, the ground is laid for a long and patient investigation of how we teach.

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Becoming a Teacher Educator

Jo Durham, Laos

Background

This article began with my own transition from language teacher to teacher educator. As an experienced teacher I was asked to move into the position of teacher educator providing on-site support in Laos for less experienced teachers. As I made this transition I recorded my own experiences in a journal which I shared with a senior colleague. In this journal I recorded stories of events that were of concern to me at the time and the retelling and sharing of these stories through my journal helped me to reconsider classroom and supervisory events with teachers. Through this process I became aware of the complexities of the teacher educator role and realised that the transition from teacher to trainer was not as simple as I had at first naively assumed. I quickly realised that my inexperience in this role could limit the development and change I could realistically expect to see in the teachers. Thus I began to search for accounts of other teachers who had made the transition that I was making in the hope that I would learn something from their experiences.

PB

Studies into the professional lives of teachers

There have been few research studies that have focused on the professional development of teacher trainers, especially in the field of ELT. This is generally also the case in mainstream education although there have been some studies into the professional lives of teachers. A review of these studies suggests typical phases in the professional life of a teacher. Fuller and Brown (1975) focusing on teachers' concerns, inferred a four-stage model of teacher development. The general trend seems to be an initial focus mainly on self and then once the image of self as a teacher is resolved, teachers tend to shift their focus to methods of instruction and finally to the impact of teaching on learning and on ethical concerns. The model suggests that teacher growth is a 'constant, unremitting self-confrontation' (Fuller and Brown, ibid: 48). In a review of 40 qualitative 'learning to teach' studies between 1987 and 1991, Kagan (1992) concludes that subsequent studies have generally confirmed the models of Fuller and Brown (1975).

In a rare application of insights on teachers to teacher educators, Kremer-Hayon and Zuzovsky (1995) interviewed eight teacher educators in Israel, all with prior teaching experience. Their analysis suggests that teacher educator professional development occurs along a similar continuum as that of teachers. That is, an initial self-focus and a search for appropriate methods and supervisory styles, followed, after experience and confidence has been gained, with a focus on students and the impact of their work. The study presented here tends to echo these findings.

My diary study

The main problem in understanding the process of becoming a teacher educator is that *much* of the process takes place within the trainer's head and is only open to analysis through introspection. As a research tool, introspection is sometimes challenged because of its so-called unscientific nature, however, it is slowly gaining acceptance, particularly when the introspection takes the form of a diary study.

A diary study is 'a first person account of a language learning or teaching experience documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events.' (Bailey, 1990: 215) It therefore generally involves three phases: recording events, reflecting on entries and identifying key themes.

In this study the journal entries were made by me, the novice teacher educator, either immediately after or a few hours after each feedback session with a teacher. There were no previously written hypotheses or research questions that directed the entries; rather I recorded whatever was of concern to me at the time.

My beliefs

Before continuing, some background information regarding my own experiences and beliefs related to teacher education will provide some useful contextual information. My experience of supervision had been directive (Gebard, 1990) and had not provided me with a model of supervision that I wanted to incorporate into my own style. I felt that this approach had not matched my own learning style and beliefs about learning, also although I was reading about and hearing new ideas, I had felt unwilling to experiment because I thought I 'might not get it right'. In seeking an approach that was compatible with my own beliefs I turned to books and published theory and decided that I wanted my own approach to embody the philosophy of a reflective approach (Schon, 1983).

What I found

My main findings were centred on three areas: Firstly, a strong self-focus. Secondly, the pervasive pull of past supervisory approaches, despite this being a model I had rejected. Thirdly, the need for sophisticated interpersonal skills. I'll discuss each of these in turn, although in reality they were intrinsically interwoven.

continued ⟶

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Self-focus

Although I had selected a model of supervision whose aims I understood and appreciated, I found that I struggled to convert this into practical "know-how". Not knowing how to apply the theoretical knowledge I had gained and not having positive role models to fall back on, resulted in a reduced confidence in my ability to fulfil my role adequately and a feeling of being deskilled. This feeling led to my becoming overly concerned with notions of self; for example I was constantly asking myself questions such as 'What am I doing?' "What should I say/do next?" It also led to notions of self-protection. I didn't feel I could admit to the teachers that, in this new role that I had taken on, I actually felt very uncertain about what I was doing. These feelings in turn became a potential threat to establishing a supportive, trusting environment in which the teachers and I could grow and experiment. They thus actually threatened the very reflective, developmental approach that I was trying to realise.

These feelings are not unlike those found in beginning teachers (Fuller, 1969; Fuller and Brown, 1975; Kagan, 1992).

The power of the past

Past experiences are known to play a significant part in shaping attitudes and influencing the way we teach (Moran, 1996). For me, my past experiences of being supervised played both a negative and a positive role. That is, my negative past supervisory experiences acted positively in that they made me want to search for a better way and stopped me from becoming directive. On the other hand, when I experienced doubt, I had nothing to fall back on except formulae and habits from my past experiences. This resulted in an inner struggle of not wanting to be directive but at the same time being instinctively drawn towards such a model as it seemed to make my role more definite and assured.

These directive urges were further compounded by the fact that I felt that the teachers wanted me to be directive, they appeared to want to know 'Was it okay?' 'What should I do?' as if there was a right answer. However, I felt that giving direction would destroy what I was attempting to do: help teachers become more aware of their own practices and the beliefs that underlie them. The key issue here is that although I wanted the style of supervision I was using to be significantly different to the directive supervision to which I had been subjected, the force of the traditional, directive top-down approach was strong both within myself and the teachers.

Interpersonal skills

Listening actively, questioning effectively and observing and analysing non-judgementally emerged as skills I felt were central to the task. If these skills are mentioned at all in the literature the assumption seems to be that they are inherent. Yet teaching, particularly in a reflective, developmental model is essentially about creating helpful relationships which enable people to grow into "the best teacher they can be." To do this the teacher educator needs to be able to consciously form relationships with trainees that will deliberately encourage reflection and self-development. Edge (1992: 4) maintains that the type of communication that truly fosters self-development entails 'learning some new rules for speaking, for listening, and for responding'. I certainly felt that I needed new ways of communicating as illustrated by the following journal extract:

21st October, 1998

'I have had no specific training for this job. I've done a lot of reading which helps but it's not enough. I feel I need specific training, especially in facilitating skills.'

For me, one of the most important skills was that of being able to listen actively and without making judgements. Active listening involves carefully attending to the speaker - paying attention to verbal and non-verbal signals. It means not forming responses or judgements while the speaker is still speaking and not filtering out what the speaker says so that it conforms to the listeners' view of reality. It means putting oneself in the frame of the speaker. In other words effective listening is an act of total unselfishness. However, due to the strong self-focus referred to earlier, in sessions with teachers I tended to focus much more on what I would say next rather than the teachers as the following journal quote illustrates:

23rd October, 1998

'I'm still too concerned with myself in the feedback sessions. A couple of times today I caught myself thinking 'what shall I say next?' instead of really listening.'

I slowly developed my listening skills through reflecting back and rephrasing which made me focus on the speaker and also helped clarify and check that I had indeed heard and understood the speaker. This was also a "neutral" technique, that is, it stopped me from asking pointed questions with implicit judgements and instead encouraged more extensive explanatory talk from the teachers. Rephrasing became a mirror for the teacher, and therefore, I hoped, helped to stimulate awareness.

The second skill I needed to develop was that of effective questioning which facilitated learning by enabling the teacher to broaden and deepen her view of the situation under discussion. As with effective listening, a good question is selfless, that is, it is asked not to generate an interesting response for the questioner, but to help the questioned person learn more about herself or the context under discussion.

Questions need to probe and encourage reflection without implying judgement or over-direction by the supervisor. Appropriate questions can be open questions that encourage the respondent to explore deeper into the issue or they may reflect back the speaker's own words so that they really do hear what it is they are saying. At the start of the programme due to a lack of confidence in my ability to manage the feedback session

and frame questions that would enable reflection, I tended to pre-plan my questions. I also asked 'why' questions which had the effect of sounding more like an interrogation and tended to produce rationalisations. It may have been better to ask questions such as 'What was important about that?' The following quote shows the difficulty I had with asking the "right" kind of questions.

14th October, 1998

'I found it so difficult to ask her the kind of questions that would encourage her to reflect and explore her beliefs.'

The third skill that I was constantly working on was the ability to observe and analyse more objectively without being overly judgmental, acting more as a mirror. Throughout an observation I took notes, usually focussing on an area that had been pre-agreed on with the teacher. The difficult part was then to present what I had seen, not in a judgmental manner, but rather in away that would challenge the teacher to explore her actions and the beliefs that underpinned them.

I think that the success of the supervisory conference depends largely on the facilitative skills of the supervisor. Without good communication skills it is easy to become objective and judgmental even while appearing to have an open, even-handed form. The skills outlined in this section are all acts of total selflessness. I need to think about how such selfless skills can develop when one is self-concerned.

Conclusion

Understanding a reflective model to teacher education is not enough. Working with teachers in such a model is a potential professional and interpersonal minefield as it asks teachers and teacher educators to make their tacit beliefs explicit, it challenges and confronts the beliefs that underlie their practice and as such it is emotionally demanding and threatening. Unless teacher educators have well-developed interpersonal skills and the ability to reflect on their own practice, the model may not stand up. If we are to rise to the challenge we need to take responsibility for our own professionalism. The professional voices of more teacher educators need to be heard so a more coherent theory of teacher education and ways to best support novice trainers can be built.

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Plenary Speaker Techniques

Mario Rinvolucri, Pilgrims, UK.

The start

When you tackle a journal article you often read a summary of the main content first, then the main content itself and then a round-up of the main content plus a conclusion. As a reader I sometimes wonder why the writer assumes my stupidity for, when reading within my field, I can often grasp and digest a good bit of the meaning on first reading. Why should I need the spoon-feeding of triple repetition?

In this article I want to break the above pattern and start out by outlining several areas this piece will *not* deal with because, though they interest me, I do not yet feel competent to tackle them:

- the relationship between audience expectation and speaker performance.
- listener techniques, intra-personal and inter-personal, for making listening to an hour-long plenary bearable.
- the ritual, liturgical nature of the plenary in the flow of a conference.
- the plenary as a ground-breaking new statement in the profession versus the plenary as an excuse for having a prestigious professional present at a conference.
- the influence of the space, the acoustics and the light on both the lecturer and the audience.
- The different types of trance that the lecturer's voice and presence can induce in different members of an audience.

Speaker modes and techniques

What this article will focus on are some of the different techniques used by plenary speakers in the presence of their audiences over, typically, a one hour period.

1. The person with a paper

In this type of plenary the lecturer has a written text, frequently aimed more at the reader than the listener which s/he then reads out. Such reading ranges from limp, flabby and a-rhythmical to rhetorically brilliant.
An example of a speaker who uses this technique to great effect is Herbert Puchta* whose texts are written for measured and dignified speaking (see **<www.hltmag.co.uk>** July 2000 for Herbert's 1999 IATEFL plenary). Using his great ability to get rapport with large groups, Puchta reads his text with occasional leaps out from it, asides and anecdotes, and is able to hold people through much of the 60 minute period. When giving a plenary Herbert is nearer to the "professor" end of his communicative spectrum than to the "magician" end, but, thanks to his congruence, the "magician" somehow irradiates the "professor".

The text of a plenary can be written for the eyes, that is, to be read, or written for the ears, that is , to be listened to. With the first kind of text, even when the reading is excellent, as in a vintage Widdowson* lecture, you can feel that that you are taking it in through the wrong sensory organ. Typically, the sentences are over-long for auditory reception and the syntax hard to sort out on the wing.

2.The plenary teller

In this style the speaker has a pretty clear outline of what s/he wants to say and looks out across the sea of heads and tells them what s/he has to say.
This technique allows her/him to use a slightly formalised conversational mode, with a lot of eye contact with people all over the lecture hall space.
This type of *plenary teller* may have some brief prompts written on cards but they are there to help the speaker keep to the sequence of the ideas and they create hardly any wall between the teller and the listeners.
The *plenary teller mode* seems to be a natural and authentic way for teacher trainers like Rod Bolitho* and Tessa Woodward* to talk to large audiences: they almost manage to create a small group atmosphere.
In this style the dish of the plenary is being cooked right there in front of the audience, the thinking is being created for their ears in the "hear" and now.

In the *person with a paper* mode everybody knows that the real thinking has been done days, weeks or years ago, and the speaker's thought in the here and now is mainly rhetorical. The audience don't usually feel themselves to be in the presence of living thought. In the *person with a paper* mode the auditory text is somehow external to both the speaker and the listeners. In *plenary teller* mode the speaker is giving birth to the text in the here and now. There is a happening rather than an account of an earlier act of writing.

3.The OHP lecturer

The OHP lecturer uses the luminous board (the Italian phrase for OHP) to structure his/her thought. The lecturer moves the oral text forward by putting up the next transparency. The flip from one transparency to the next structures time and thought in the lecture.

When the transparencies are
a) visible worth looking at
b) worth looking at
c) in a contrapuntal relationship to the oral text, this type of lecture can be rivetting.

When the writing/images on the transparency are
out of focus
too small to see properly,
distorted by an OHP too near a huge screen,
d) visually boring
e) exactly the same as the spoken text of the lecture.

then this type of lecture can be so dull as to be physically painful.

The *OHP lecturer's* most frequent, technically lazy mistake is to go on stage with transparencies that have such small lettering as to be only legible by people under thirty sitting in the front five rows.

A widely accepted practice among plenary speakers is to put up the same words and ideas on the OHP as are flowing from their speech organs. This seems to me to be bizarre and pleonastic behaviour and gives me a feeling of being mildly, continuously insulted over the hour the plenary lasts. (To be fair, I do not feel this when I am trying to follow a plenary in a language in which I am lower intermediate- in this case the parallel input of the same text helps me.)
There are many ways in which the alternative input channel that the OHP offers can be used effectively. If...

1) The lecturer puts up the next transparency and leaves a 30 second oasis of quiet reading time, after which she speaks about the information on the transparency, **without repeating** it.
2) The lecturer speaks continuously, but from time to time puts up transparencies that put a differing/ opposing point of view to the one she is expounding orally.
3) The transparencies carry a purely pictorial, non-verbal comment on the argument being developed in the oral text. Luke Prodromou* uses such visual comments as well as musical comments in his plenaries.

4. The entertainer

John Fanselow*, author of **Breaking Rules** (Longman 88), gives striking plenaries in which he dons funny glasses to make a point, disappears from the stage and ends up somewhere in the middle of the audience with his portable mike in broadcast conversation with one of his listeners and uses strange noises and a variety of props. All of this is done to carry and underline a serious academic message.

In a sober, down-played, Hungarian sort of way, Peter Medgyes* can also do *entertainer* plenaries. You may have seen his plenary on humour in which he uses a hat that lifts up each time he comes to the punch line of a joke he is telling!

The *entertainer* plenary speaker allows people to see her/him experiencing bizarre situations and in this way makes the main points memorable. This style places the listeners firmly in "audience" role, and emphasises the gap between the speaker and them. It is hard to feel strong empathy with an *entertainer* speaker, s/he has put her/himself "out there" and "out there" s/he stays. Unlike the *plenary teller*, the *entertainer* does not enmesh the listener in conversational intimacies- the listener remains disassociated and therefore relatively free.

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5.Duet plenary speakers

I cannot remember a lot of two voice plenaries, though this technical borrowing from the world of entertainment could usefully happen more frequently. Two speakers offer the audience different ways of relating to them and hook the listeners into rapport with them differently. Each of them offers the audience a different set of trance states. The two-voice plenaries I have witnessed normally had the two speakers address the audience alternately. I do not think I have ever seen a simultaneous dialogue between the two people in the presence of the audience, though this could be a useful way of presenting both information and points of view.
One of the fascinating things about *duet plenaries* is the intrinsic interest in observing how the two people act and react with each other. At the end of a slick, highly audio-visual presentation at a British Council Conference in Sala Europa in Bologna, Italy, in the mid eighties, Brian Abbs* gave his co-presenter, Ingrid Freebairn*, a huge bouquet of flowers. That particular moment was over-rehearsed and smelled of Longman being clever, but it highlights the point that the speakers mutual relationship can be fascinating to an audience. In a way we had spent an hour with Brian and Ingrid as our jocular parents.

6.Mass workshoppers

This group of plenary speakers often design the plenary in the following routine, that gets repeated several times in the hour:

- the audience work in pairs or small groups on an exercise
- half a dozen of them are asked to share their feedback, via a mobile mike, with the whole hall.
- the speaker rounds off the sequence with a brief lecturette, which draws on the listeners' recent experience of the activity.

This kind of "deviation" of a plenary lecture into a mass workshop can be gloriously successful if the audience are genuinely willing to play ball. If they give themselves generously to the activities and gain the whoomph that comes from doing this, the plenary can be a conflagration of energy.

If, though, there are enough teachers in the hall who " did not come to play", or who are insecure about using their English, then this kind of plenary can have a forced and embarrassed effect. I well remember shuffling in the crowd out of a large plenary hall at a Spanish TESOL conference three minutes after finishing a mass workshop style plenary and hearing one guy in front of me in the crowd say to his friend: " No nos dijo nada- todo juegos" (he didn't say anything- nothing but games .)
This person and many in his part of the hall had avoided doing the exercises, except those where they had to

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stand up, and so had been bored for the best/worst part of an hour.

There must be some people who go to a plenary expecting one-way communication from the person at the front to them and are upset to find themselves in dialogue with those round them. I will never forget the person who told me:

" I met you ten years ago at a plenary in Italy- you asked us to write irregular verbs on our neighbours' backs- my neighbour was Sir Randolph Quirk!" (a famous grammarian)

7.Plenary delegation

This technique involves the plenary speaker identifying some one in the audience who is willing to come on stage and recount a personal experience that is central to the topic of the plenary.

I made this happen in a lecture on mutual supervision. In the last five minutes a member of the audience came on stage and told us of his experience trying to introduce a form of mutual supervision to his staffroom. The young man, to his amazement and trepidation, took over the plenary task and closed the session to the applause of the auditorium.

The same thing happened in another plenary of mine, this time on letter writing in the language classroom. Again, in the last five minutes, the author of a book on e-mailing came on stage and closed the plenary with a fascinating account of e-mail exchanges over three months between an adult class in Italy and a bunch of folk in a remote Alaskan settlement. His contribution set off and strengthened the points that had been made by the plenary speaker over the previous 55 minutes.
The power in this technique is that the member of the audience, in a weird, symbolic way, represents the audience as he walks onto that stage, and marvellously, he displaces the main speaker, a kind of death of the parent figure.

8.The plenary speaker as experimenter/ subject of an experiment

There are some things that can only be understood quickly and clearly if you see them happen in front of you. When a plenary speaker wants an audience to understand exactly how a person goes about correcting his/her oral language production the most obvious way of presenting this is to ask for a volunteer to come on stage and question her/him about the way his/her " internal monitor" works. This way of working brings even a jaded audience to life because they see a certain level of skill in action and because there is real dialogue between one of their number and the lecturer. They are witnessing a living situation and nobody in the hall knows how it will turn out. Working this way in front of 900 people is a strange experience for everyone as the plenary speaker simply abandons the audience and concentrates all his/her attention on the volunteer. This abandonment focuses the audience's attention on the interaction at the front.

The finish

I am well aware that the above attempt at describing some of the plenary modes I have witnessed and/or been involved in over the years does not constitute a complete typology of the techniques used even in plenaries at EFL conferences. If you were to survey plenaries across subjects, you would undoubtedly find plenty more modes of presentation.

As a move towards filling out the typology proposed in this article, why don't you send THE TEACHER TRAINER descriptions of other types of plenaries where you have been in the audience or where you have been the lecturer?
You may feel that my categorisation is an inadequate one and may want to propose a firmer one. This too, could be of great interest to TTT readers.

†The speaker named does not confine her/himself to the plenary mode just decribed.

Mario Rinvolucri currently edits **The Teacher Trainer's** sister publication **Humanising Language Teaching,** which you can find at **< www.hltmag.co.uk>.** His first CDRom is called **Mindgame**, with Isobel Fletcher de Tellez, published by **Clarity, < www.clarity.com.hk>** in January 2000. His most recent book, with Davis and Garside is **Ways of Doing, CUP 1999.**
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TRAINEE VOICES AND CURRENT RESEARCH

VOICES IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACT[1]

by A. J. Meier, University of Northern Iowa, USA

Introduction

Language teacher education (e.g., MA TESOL programs) represents a crossroad of cultures as participants increasingly move about the world. This state of affairs calls for attention to aspects of such education that are potentially problematic as they embody underlying cultural values and beliefs not shared by all or even most participants.2 The purpose of this article is to bring to awareness aspects of foreign and second language teacher education programs that are informed by different cultural orientations. To this end, oral interviews were conducted with international students in a US MA TESOL program. The awareness raising incurred by an identification of key aspects and how they relate to differing underlying cultural orientations is necessary if students are to internalize program/course goals for their own future language teaching contexts. Conflicting expectations can become a basis for attributions of low aptitude, motivation, or competence, and even of personality deficiencies. A more positive, cooperative learning environment can be achieved by transforming such conflicts into cross-cultural learning experiences by addressing them from a more anthropological perspective early in a program. Suggestions for cross-cultural orientation for students will be provided in the conclusion. Although the study reported here involves only 10 international students in a specific program at a specific institution, the results are applicable to a broad range of teacher education settings. It is the key aspects and their cultural underpinnings that are at issue rather than the specific illustrations thereof.

Respondents

The 10 student respondents in this study (F = 5, M = 5) were enrolled in the MA TESOL program at a medium-sized, midwestern US university. This TESOL program has a typical enrollment of about 60 students, 45% of whom are non-US Americans. All instructors are US-Americans. The respondents represent 8 countries (Chile, Colombia, Germany, Japan, Korea, Palestine, Russia, and Tibet/India) and were between the ages of 24 and 37 (M = 28.9) at the time of the study. All had spent at least 1 year in the MA program and 7 had just completed their MA degree.

The investigator conducted individual audio-taped interviews with each respondent two days after giving them a list of possible topics to consider in terms of what they perceived to be "typically American" in their MA TESOL program. This resulted in semi-structured interviews, whereby respondents directed the interviews by both exploring pre-determined topics of their choice and nominating new topics. The aspects frequently identified by the respondents are presented below in a representative sample of the students' voices, followed by a summary discussion relating these aspects to dimensions of cultural variability (e.g., collectivism vs. individualism). The five broad aspects identified are the following: student-instructor interaction, approach, content, information access, and professional identity.

Student-instructor interaction

The comments below indicate the perceived distance between instructors and students and subsequent accessibility to instructors to be a key aspect of difference. Indeed, Hofstede (1986) describes instructor-student interaction as "an archetypal human phenomenon" that is "deeply rooted in the culture of a society" (p. 303).

S1: ...the teacher [in home country] should always be respected first because this is the person who leads you to the god.

S2: But there [home country] the status of the professor is higher. It seems like god sitting.

And here I learned something which has struck me. I mean any student can ask any question inside or outside the classroom.

S5: ...because in X [home country] the teachers should know everything. Teachers are gods, you know.

S3: I found American professors to be less formal. [...] There wouldn't be any attempt to be sort of know-all professor.

S6: Back home, it's like god's blessing if you find a professor you are looking for.

S8: Here every professor has his office and they have a special time for attending the student.

S10: Even though you call professors 'Doctor' and use their last name, you can go to their office and talk and ask whatever questions as long as it's related to what you're studying.

Approach

The role and perceived status of an instructor also affects the educational approach, which is the second aspect students found worthy of extensive comment. Recurring themes regard student participation, the relative amount of lecture versus discussion, and the importance placed on critical reading and writing and on doing research. Two students commented on plagiarism.

S1: And critical thinking, I think it's very typical American.

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And research-writing. It's a lot American.

Not memorization in the United States. I haven't seen people memorizing.

S6: Back home you really have to read and memorize.

S2: But back home we are mainly dependent on the professor. [...] they don't encourage the critical thinking in the students, so students are mainly like recorders...

We rarely, rarely do research [in home country] and we are poor in writing skills...

The amount of homework here is much more because we have to read different articles.

Students or learners have to take the teachers' political point of view [in home country] [...] and we have to be cautious about mentioning things that contradict the professors' ideas or ideology; otherwise this will affect our grades.

S3: The whole idea of research, I would say, involves some kind of data collection that I thought was quite American to me. [...] While in X [home country] it was more philosophically oriented, it was more expressing your opinions.

But here the attendance was very important, reading and doing your homework was also very important, because there was constant discussion ... you had to come to class and discuss it with your peers and often you would feel guilty if you did not do it because you could not be a really good partner to other students, and that really put a lot of responsibility, I guess, on me as well.

and being honest in your writing, you know, no cheating, no plagiarizing... I was never told about that in X [home country]

S5: I didn't know that there was plagiarism or not.

S3: This program has much more discussions and seminars and things like that and other activities which involve students and make them participate and I think again this is cultural. Like I said, everything is based on democracy or at least attempts to be.

S5: Well, I was surprised first to have a grade of participation. [...] Back in X [home country] it's just lecture style.

S9: I think that [in the US] there is like a tendency towards discussion in class. In my country probably we have more lecture.

There is like a culture of research in the United States.

I never wrote journals, taking into account experiences and that is kind of different as well, because I think that my country is more formal.

S8: Something that really struck me here was the reading, the amount of reading and the amount of writing. [...] We just go to lectures and we take notes...but we never have to present essays or do research papers.

Like the syllabus...like they have so strictly the way that they are going to focus their class and then they are able to follow it.

Americans are very organized; we are very unorganized for everything.

S4: If I speak, it means the professor feels something bad because I'm saying something against what you say, so I can't maybe say that, but here we should say that, you know.

[in-class presentations] but I think it's typically American. I don't know why, but they want to speak.

Content

Students made frequent comments regarding methodologies or approaches advocated by instructors, orientation towards current vs. past research, and the relative emphasis placed on ESL vs. EFL teaching.

S2: I can say the audiolingual method is emphasized more [in home country], but other methods, I mean, if you try a new method, you will not survive. You'll get a lot of difficulties from students, and from the administration, and from the parents even.

S4: ...but actually if I had learned a lot [about this American TESOL stuff], I can't use it in X [home country]. It's all right here...so if I want to teach it, it's not practical.

S3: [neglect of addressing EFL (as contrasted with ESL)] I think that is quite cultural; the ignorance towards what's going on beyond the borders of the country was not important; that was not introduced [...] quite a heavy emphasis on the methods developed in the United States. ...none of the professors ever asked students to really go into details and present, because some of the students did have educational background to start with so they could have expressed some of the ways foreign languages are taught, because I'm sure there are other cultural approaches.

S6: Well, probably bilingualism is typical American because when I came to bilingual education class, I couldn't figure out what it is about.

S1: ...content-area teaching, it's very typical American.

S5: I think that X [people from home country] value the history very much, but here like the current issues.

S6: ..and America is definitely future-oriented, so the research in that way deals with current, with innovations. [...] What is now, it's not proven it's good, so you just say that it exists [...] so you really have to look at the past [in home country] and not the future.

S7: Professors [in home country] referred mainly to well-established, traditional theories.

Information access

The majority of students commented on the role of technology and the library in their studies in the US as compared to their home countries. One student noted the related economic factor.

S1: I didn't have much access to articles back home. We don't have computer and all in the library to search for materials.

S2: But back home our libraries are small and we don't have access to the computer...

S3: Well, technology again is another cultural aspect...especially the state of economy of the country.

S5: ...the library system is so great here. Like I can ask them to loan from another university.

S10: Well here we have more access to information. [...] and you have access to internet and there's a wonderful library, and what is really incredible to me is that I can go into this library and get a book from anywhere. E-mail does a wonderful job too if you're too scared to go to the [professor's] office.

Professional Identity

The students, as English teachers (and speakers of English) in their home country, clearly enjoy a prestige not enjoyed in the US. Again economics play a major role.

S1: There's not much difficulty getting a job if you're good in English.

S2: Anyone who speaks English has sort of a high status because he or she can work at different places.

S3: I always felt that in X [home country] foreign language teachers, in general, are quite privileged. [...] And looking at ESL teachers, they really don't have much respect in this country whatsoever, and I think it is probably just because of the population they teach. I

S6: Because back home a person who teaches English is prestigious because he can work as a private teacher and get money...people really need you because they need English.

S8: If you speak English you have better position than any other person, if you speak it well.

S9: I think that probably the status of teachers in my country is not very good. But probably with the English teachers it is kind of different; I think that you can get a job. [...] The market is huge.

Cultural variability

The value of identifying the aspects presented above remains limited without an attempt to understand the perceived differences in terms of their cultural underpinnings. Only then can conflicts be approached as cultural rather than personal issues, thereby leading to better communication and greater learning. Dimensions of cultural variability provide a basis for understanding many of the differences identified above. The major such dimension and one which appears to subsume other relevant dimensions is that of collectivism vs. individualism (Triandis, 1995).[3]

The students' perceptions clearly point to the US as a more individualistic society, allowing greater freedom of individual expression of ideas, even when not conforming to those of others. This leads to assignments involving personal reactions and experiences and opens the door to potential conflict and confrontation in interactive classrooms. Such a student-centered style would be less valued in a more collectivistic culture, which would place greater value on conformity in an attempt to avoid conflict and thus maintain face in more teacher-centered education.

Maintaining face plays an especially critical role in student-instructor interaction in a more collectivistic culture, which is generally associated with a relatively high power distance between students and instructors (Hofstede, 1980). The student respondents perceived the power distance between students and instructors in the US to be lower than in their home culture, which is consistent with a characterization of the US as a more individualistic culture that places a higher value on egalitarianism. American instructors, in contrast to students' home country instructors, were not viewed as "god-like," which also appeared to inform respondents' views that American instructors are more accessible. Power distance differences also underlie differences in formality and the authority conferred upon instructors. In a more collectivistic culture authority outweighs experience and students may view themselves as "recorders" of instructors' ideas.4 This contrasts with the greater emphasis on empirical research in a more individualistic culture, where students are expected to read extensively and critically, developing their own ideas and seeking empirical support for them. The view of ideas as personal possessions is also an individualistic trait that leads to the stigmatized connotations of plagiarism, which is not, as illustrated above, a familiar concept to all (Althen, 1988; Johannsen, 1996).

Prerequisite to considering a variety of viewpoints and forming independent ideas is equal access to information. A factor in such access is the degree to which verbal communication is valued and information is thus explicitly expressed and free to all rather than a currency possessed and meted out by a select custodial "ingroup." This contrast is characterized by the cultural dimension of low-context vs. high-context communication associated with individualism and collectivism, respectively (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Collectivists are generally less likely than individualists to explicitly share

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information (Triandis, 1995). However, economics is also a major factor in modern information access, for financial support is necessary to equip and staff libraries and computer laboratories.

A sense of self-esteem and self-orientation associated with individualism (Triandis, 1995) may explain the extent to which the students found their MA TESOL program to be somewhat myopic in its focus on ESL rather than EFL and on teaching methodologies and topics currently favored and developed in the US (e.g., communicative approach, bilingualism). Individualism vs. collectivism and its association with low uncertainty avoidance cultures vs. high uncertainty avoidance cultures, respectively (Triandis, 1995) also contributes to an understanding of the perceived focus on "unproven" current research in the US rather than on "well-established, traditional theories." One last cultural dimension, associated with individualism vs. collectivism, that appears to play a role in the students' perceptions of difference is that of monochronic vs. polychronic time (Hall, 1983). Monochronic time, associated with individualism (Ting-Toomey, 1997), is consistent with instructors' pre-set office hours, with a linear, organized syllabus, and with sequential turn-taking in class discussions. Two students commenting on the latter expressed insecurity about when and how to gain the floor in the classroom. Both students are from cultures generally categorized as having a more polychronic time orientation (South American), which construes time in a less linear, compartmentalized way.

The last aspect commented on by students, although not directly linked to individualism or collectivism, is an important consideration in language teacher education in terms of understanding the professional identity of the students. The respondents indicated their status as (future) EFL teachers to be different from ESL teachers. It is thus conceivable that the type of person who pursues an EFL teaching career would be different from one who seeks to teach ESL, different, for example, in motivation, career expectations, goals, values and beliefs. These too can be viewed as cultural differences informing students' professional needs.

Conclusion

If a major factor in miscommunication is a lack of awareness of cultural differences and their consequences (Singer, 1988), it is imperative that participants in language teacher education become cognizant of their own culturally informed expectations and behaviors and how these might differ from those of others. The association of key aspects of difference with underlying cultural orientations as discussed above provides a basis for predicting, understanding, and dealing with potential conflicts. Orientations and introductory classes provide venues for preparing international students for their program of study in this regard. An annual orientation session to this end, conducted by the author, includes awareness-raising of the influence of participants' own cultures on their educational expectations and behaviors, comparative awareness-raising and underlying explanations (see e.g., Fowler, 1999; Kohls & Knight, 1994), simulations, and critical incidents (adapted from Brislin et al., 1986) that focus on issues both social and academic, especially student-instructor interaction. Further topics include values of US education, culture shock and coping with it, past student comments about the degree program, and suggestions for interacting with others that differ along the collectivist-individualist continuum (see e.g., Brislin, 1993; Triandis, 1995). A required class in the MA TESOL program ("Introduction to Graduate Studies") affords further opportunity to introduce students to reflective assignments (e.g., journal writing), discourse conventions, including analysis of scholarly articles in the field, and to the concept of plagiarism. The "meaning" of research is addressed and activities are assigned to engage students in use of the library and computer technology.

Such an introductory approach draws students' attention to areas of potential conflict, and they become engaged in informed observation of their own "biculturalism" within the educational system. A cultural understanding of the differences and difficulties they perceive lessens insecurity and ultimately invests students' with increased control over their environment and reactions to it, which clearly enhances their educational experience. Such an intercultural perspective creates unique collaborative student-instructor interaction and concomitant positive classroom rapport. The atmosphere observed by the author is one of increased curiosity, confidence, and growth as both self-awareness and other-awareness are fostered. Ultimately, students develop a general cross-cultural awareness that serves them well far beyond their immediate studies.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the editor for her helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1 This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the 7th Symposium for Language Teacher Educators, The University of Edinburgh, November, 1999.
2 According to Hofstede (1986), the major responsibility for addressing such aspects lies with educators.
3 It is important to note that "tendencies toward individualism and collectivism exist within every individual and in every society" (Triandis, 1995, xiii) and are context dependent. Thus, assignment to one or the other denotes a tendency rather than an absolute categorization.
4 As Lieberman (1997) says in characterizing education informed by collectivism, "Don't question an author, just understand the meaning" (p. 204).

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

1. Teachers Develop Teachers Research
5th International conference September 9-11, 2001
Ankara, Turkey
http://www.metu.edu.tr/home/wwwmld/TDTR5/undercall.htm

2. Autonomy in Language Teacher Education
Nov 14-16th 2001.
IALS, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.
IALS.symposium@ed.ac.uk

PEOPLE WHO TRAIN PEOPLE

Robin White works as a florist in a shop in Canterbury. He has trained florists to pass the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ 1 and 2) at Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture and trains apprentices in the florists' shop where he works. When I went in to pick him up for lunch he was with a young apprentice.
"Robin, something here honks!" she said.
"Well, let's see." said Robin, "It could be the water in one of these ten buckets of foliage that you clean out every day but you will have done that, so ..."
"Oh yes, I did that this morning!"
"So then it must be this plant here. It's called a bog plant and now you know why!"
We went to lunch.

A real natural

TW. Robin, how did you get into floristry?
RW. Some 10 or 11 years ago I was working in the Hooden Horse, a village pub, where the local gardeners' society held meetings in the saloon bar to plan their annual shows. As I was serving them, the conversation was that the ladies' flower arranging class was getting smaller every year. Someone said they should drop the *ladies'* so that the men could have a go too. Someone said, "They wouldn't want to" and a friend on the committee turned to me and said, "Robin, you'd have a go, couldn't you?", just for fun.
TW. Had you ever done any flower arranging before?
RW. Never before, but they twisted my arm; I entered the show and won first prize.
TW. Amazing!
RW. And that's how it started. I moved to be assistant gardener in a hotel in Faversham because I was getting interested in the plants. I joined the local horticultural society and entered their flower show.
TW. And you won first prize?
RW. Yes, and took all the cups on my first attempt.
TW. What a natural!

continued ►

In at the deep end

RW. Then a lady got me to join NAFAS (National Association of Flower Arrangers' Societies). By then I was bar-coding at Marks and Spencers. I was made redundant. So then a girl-friend of mine suggested we start up our own business and open a florists..

TW. Did she know anything about floristry?

RW. No, but she was good at business. We approached the government for a start-up grant and made a business plan. We were all set. Then we were asked by a friend to do the flowers for a very large funeral. They wanted some very complicated things—like an articulated lorry made of flowers, and a Thunderbird and a Bentley...made all of flowers.

TW. Had you done anything like this before?

RW. Never before. My first mistake was to make the articulated lorry out of green florists' foam. You see, once I had soaked it with water, it was so heavy I couldn't lift it.

TW. Oh great.

RW. You see, I was very naive and ignorant. Then my brother suggested I make a lorry shape out of pegboard. So we did. And then wired 800 chrysanthemum blooms through the holes.

TW. So this was your first job and you managed it.

RW. Yes, but the funeral put me off the whole idea of being a florist. It was so much work I was so ignorant. So I knew I had to go to a college and get trained.

Getting trained

RW. I spent 3 years all together getting qualified.

TW. Did you have a practicum?

RW. Yes. Around Mothers' Day we were all sent out for a 5 week work placement at a florists'. I chose the one I wanted to work in. When I left, they said, "If ever you need a job, you know where to come." After college I took them up on the offer. I've been there virtually ever since.

My own shop

TW. You never wanted a shop of your own?

RW. Well, after I'd been at the florists' for 5 years, a colleague suggested we open our own place in a farm shop on the main Canterbury to Ashford Road. So I left. But after 6 months of not being able to make enough money to draw a wage, I decided to call it a day. You see, when people have been used to paying £2.99 for a bunch of flowers by the till, they'll not pay for a proper hand-tied bouquet with a bit of a mark- up in price.

Moving into training

TW. Did you go straight back to the florists'?

RW. Not right away. A lady in our flower club was doing a floristry course at Hadlow College. At the time they needed an assistant tutor to help with the assessing. One tutor couldn't get round the whole class demonstrating, guiding, assessing and filling in all the paper work for each participant. So that's where I came in. Funnily enough, 2 days a week assessing and training at college gave me almost double what I could earn for one whole week as a florist.

TW. Did you enjoy being a trainer?

RW. Not to start with I didn't. I felt half the class didn't want to be there. They were sent by their shops on day release. The other half paid for themselves and came because they wanted to and were keen to learn as much as they could. The other lot messed around at the back of the class. One girl always arrived late. She'd plonk her head down on the desk and say, "Are we going to do a lot today? Because I've just got back from a night club."

TW. Dreadful.

RW. It was quite an eye-opener. I used to think, "Why am I here?"

The training team

TW. Did you have good colleagues on the training team?

RW. Yes, lovely. Very knowledgeable. I was accepted as one of them from day one. Of course, they knew me as one was my old tutor and one had been a fellow student. They were also keen on the fact that I was in the industry. I knew what was required in a shop. A lot of tutors don't. These days, at college, they do have a monthly panel of industry people giving feedback on what is required of a newly - trained florist.

Trainer training

TW. Were you given any training to be a trainer?

RW. No, I think I picked it up. I worked from memories of my own past training and from the requirements of the NVQ. The Society of Floristry have guidelines on wiring and taping techniques that haven't changed since I was at college. Also, we worked two in the room so we could watch each other and pick up tips.

Attitude to trainees

TW. Did things get better with the unmotivated trainees?

RW. Yes, I think...because of my attitude towards them. I'm a bit unconventional. I haven't had any teacher or trainer training. I'll give you an example. This particular day, we were working on a loose, open wreath. You'll remember, you green them up first and then add flowers to a set design. So this girl was just putting flowers in. I said, "You haven't put your foliage in". "No", she said. "I'm not going to have foliage". "Why?" "I don't want foliage. I just want flowers". So I said, "Fine. Of course it won't be marked, so you're wasting your time". I just walked away. She went, "Aren't you going to make me do it?" I said, "No. You do it your way if you want. It just won't be marked." I walked away again. Of course, when I turned around, she was putting in the foliage. So my attitude was, "You do what you like. If you don't want to learn, I'm not bothered". There were a couple of occasions when I was hauled into the office because a mother had

complained that I had said that her daughter's arrangement was horrible. But you see, it was my way of getting through to them.

TW. So you believe in being honest.

RW. No, blunt! Telling them.

Main messages

TW. So your main message is to tell it like it really is.

RW. I want to get trainees to realise whether they are wasting their time or not. Will they stay in the industry or will they leave. I tell them I've worked in the industry for 11 years, and it's hard work. It's cold. It's dirty. The hours are long and the wages poor. The staff in florists' change constantly. You have to know right from the start. You have to love the work, the meeting people. You have to be dedicated.

TW. Hmm. What other messages do you have?

RW. I don't want everyone to turn out a clone arrangement, all identical. I want people to put in their little bit of flair...and the knowledge they think they've got and alter it from there. That's what makes the arrangement different in the shop. Five staff all making the same kind of wreath would all have a slightly different style.

TW. What's your style?

RW. I was always told that my work was slow...painful to watch...but I always turned out an immaculate, precise piece of work. I like everything I make to go out the shop as if *I* was going to have it.

TW. What do you love about the job?

RW. Everyday is so different. The general public amuse me immensely. Only today a woman rang up to complain about some red roses she'd received. They hadn't lasted very long. I said, "Oh, dear", and asked her when they had been delivered. And she said, "Last Wednesday". So I said, "Right. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday...7 days. Can I congratulate you, madam, on making your perishable goods last a full week. Red roses normally have a vase life of 4 to 5 days. How did you do it?" She said, "So I haven't got a complaint?". I said, "No. Red roses, shortest life, strongest meaning". Another lady rang up to complain. She's been sent goldenrod flowers. I told her I'd done 10 bouquets with goldenrod that day and all the customers had been happy. She said, "Well, perhaps they like goldenrod". So I said, "You've hit the nail on the head, madam. They told me what they like. See, I'm not psychic. Can I suggest you tell the people who send you flowers that you don't like goldenrod or, alternatively, just accept the flowers with the good grace they were given?"

TW. You handle your customers the same as your trainees!

RW. Oh, yes. I find we pamper people too much.

Continuing professional development.

TW. Apart from working in the industry, training and tutoring, how do you keep yourself developing professionally?

RW. The floristry industry is changing so rapidly. They are constantly coming up with new products for the florist to use. For example, I'm just trying out a metal framework for hand-tied bouquets for bridal work. Then I've just been on a willow weaving day — fascinating. It was in an old converted barn —13 of us. And we all went away with a willow woven peacock. Then the Dutch Council of Holland do road shows to keep British florists up with new ideas from the Continent. They are good. They do a lot of work with twigs and cane and structures. We adapt that for our corporate work. It keeps you motivated and fresh as a florist.

TW. What holds back your development?

RW. The English public. They are a bit old-fashioned. They still like their triangular arrangements, unfortunately. I did some work for a company just the other day. I asked if they'd like something different for a change. They said, "Oh, do something exotic". Well, I did. But when I took it in, one said, "Oh my God, what have you done? I don't like it." The lady next to her said, "Oh I think it's beautiful!" So I said, "Well you've obviously got taste. And you haven't." I can't help it. I have to say what I feel. But there's about 1% of the public who like something a little stylish and different. And that 1% make all the difference. I've no plans to get out of the industry. I'm quite happy.

Just for Interest

Following the principle that it is often when you stop working on a problem and go for a walk that the solution to the problem comes to mind, or that it is precisely when you are reading something outside your field that a good idea for work strikes you, this column gives space to amusing and interesting ideas and texts that were definitely NOT written with modern language teacher trainers in mind.

Beate Hermelin, an innovative experimental psychologist has written a book called "Bright Splinters of the Mind"*. The book aims to help readers to understand the mental strategies underlying the talents of autistic, "idiots savants", that is, individuals whose general mental function is impaired and who are usually unable to live an independent life but who have specific skills in one domain that are spectacularly better than other people's. Each chapter is devoted to one talent for instance for calendar calculations, date memory, poetry, foreign languages, music or drawing. The main character of Chapter Five on foreign languages for example is Christopher who at 37 lives in a sheltered community and can understand, read, write and translate to and from Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Welsh.

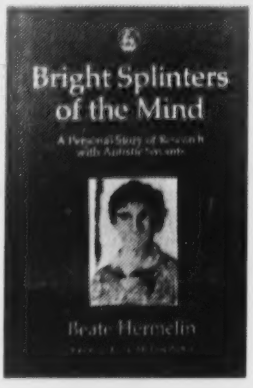
continued ►

The book is noteworthy for a number of reasons. It is on a subject that seems to fascinate many of us. How are some individuals able to perform the most marvelous feats such as producing extraordinarily accurate drawings of complex buildings seen only briefly by the artist, sing complete arias from memory after one visit to an opera or tell you on which day of the week any particular date will fall? The book is also immensely readable because of its clarity of expression, its creatively devised experiments, its human face and the dignity accorded to its subjects.

The science involved has been described simply and so is easy to understand. Basically, patterns of success and failure shown by savants are compared with those shown by experts in the skill domain and also with ordinary people. The patterns of results are also compared within themselves that is, within the savant group. Using both sets of comparisons the strategies of savants are discovered. The majority of such people are autistic, and those with autism have a general tendency towards local processing, i.e. to focus their attention on single items and segments of information.(Words and morphemes in Christopher's case). But for those that also have a specific talent, such details gradually connect with each other and the resulting network lead to a knowledge base about the area of special ability (such as the structure of calendars in the case of the calendrical wizards). This exercising of their special abilities within their talent domain seems much more important to the savants than the end product. Thus, in Christopher's case, he doesn't seem interested in his foreign languages for communication purposes or for personal expression but merely for the collecting of words and languages.

However, because of their general cognitive limitations there is little conscious search for new forms of expression, such as for instance Kandinsky's innovation of abstract painting or Schoenberg's system of twelve- tone music. Nevertheless, their achievements deserve our admiration and respect.

I was fortunate enough to be able to speak to Beate Hermelin about her work and ask her some questions. She told me that she and her collaborators have carried out research about the nature of autistic savant ability for the last twenty years. Her main aim has been not only to show WHAT savants can do but make an attempt to discover HOW they achieve their extraordinary feats. She also hoped that the book might illustrate the pleasure and excitement that she has derived from her research. The book will move and fascinate a wide range of people.



* "Bright Splinters of the Mind" by Beate Hermelin. Jessica Kingsley Pubs.(2001). ISBN 1-85302-931-9.

Working with Multiple Intelligences in the Training of Language Teachers

by Linda Taylor, UK

The following is an account of a project undertaken within the undergraduate modular TESOL component of certain Modern Languages Degrees at Nottingham Trent University. Its aim was to give trainees a basic practical understanding of how the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) can be used in the teaching of languages, through the experience of working with multiple intelligences during the training itself. The trainees involved in the pilot project explored ways of learning that they had not used before or had ceased to use. After the experiment, all the trainees recorded extremely positive feedback, and even those who had been sceptical at the beginning were thoroughly convinced by the methods at the end of the course and eager to implement them in their own teaching.

The Background to MI Theory

When I read Howard Gardner's Frames of Mind (1983), it struck a chord with me, as it had done with teachers worldwide. The problems that Gardner identified in traditional approaches to teaching and assessment, especially at primary and secondary level, included the following:

- Paper and pencil tests were the usual means of assessment and these tested logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic intelligences only;
- People were classified as 'able' or 'less able' on this basis;
- There was a notion that intelligence is 'fixed' and unchangeable;
- There was a corresponding notion that talent is 'inborn', not learned.

In Gardner's view:

- An effective educational environment is at least as important as inborn talent;
- Talents are hidden until opportunities arise to display them;
- Opportunities for talents to be revealed can be given by replicating real life tasks;
- Such real life tasks are important because we need to assess talent by direct means, not mediated by language;
- We need to allow for different ways of approaching a task;
- We need to break down tasks into achievable steps.

Gardner's main contribution to educational theory is to celebrate the fact that each human being is unique and has

a unique combination of factors that together make 'intelligence'. He noted that products created by or problems found and solved by composers, politicians and mathematicians involve distinct symbol systems, operations, sense modalities, and intelligences. The tasks are not the same for the painter as for the physicist, for example, and it is misleading to try to measure their achievements on the same 'neutral' scale. He further believes that there is no 'pure' form of intelligence: intelligences are always expressed in the context of specific tasks, domains, and disciplines: spatial intelligence, for instance, can be expressed by a child's block building. MI theory and associated practical tools for diagnosing, teaching and assessing allow us to begin to do a better job as teachers.

The Theory

Gardner originally proposed seven intelligences:

The logical/mathematical
Which entails the ability to reason, either deductively or inductively, and to recognise and manipulate abstract patterns and relationships;

The verbal/linguistic
Which entails ease in producing language but also sensitivity to nuance and rhythm;

The musical
Which entails sensitivity to pitch, timbre, rhythm, but also responsiveness to emotional implications;

The visual/spatial
Which entails ease in creating visual-spatial representations of the world and in transferring these into mental or concrete form;

The bodily/kinesthetic
Which entails using the body to solve problems, or to convey ideas;

The interpersonal
Which entails the ability to work effectively with others;

The intrapersonal
Which entails having access to one's own emotions and using them to guide behaviour.

Other researchers, and indeed Gardner himself, have since posited further intelligences. Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence, for example, consists in 'empathising, regulating one's moods, motivating oneself and persisting in the face of frustration, controlling impulse and delaying gratification'. (Goleman,1995)

The Aims of Institutions Using MI

For the purposes of the project under discussion, I looked at the aims of institutions that had introduced MI into their curriculum as part of projects supervised by Gardner, largely in the USA. They included:

- helping students understand their abilities and those of others
- showing students how to use their strengths to work on their weaknesses
- helping students learn more, by engaging many senses
- providing a variety of assessment types.

The mark of an MI inspired educational institution seems to be that topics are taught in a variety of ways and assessment is fair to all intelligences. Two keywords in MI are *project based curriculum* and *portfolio assessment*. The education provided takes place in the context of projects, which, because they are open-ended, offer opportunities to find alternative solutions and unexpected outcomes, using various strategies and combinations of intelligences.

Teaching with MI entails the use of appropriate techniques and processes, which include:

- Providing apprenticeships with people who are experienced in the field concerned
- Exposing individuals to situations which can stimulate several intelligences;
- Providing materials aimed at different intelligences;
- Providing a range of assessment formats, e.g. notebooks, journals, portfolios, discussions, video, art and craft, presentations, model building, and projects of all kinds.

'Intelligence-fair' Assessment

In MI assessment, portfolio work is crucial because it provides an ideal opportunity for both formative (process-based) and summative (product-based) assessment. According to Torff (1997), our profession has been guilty of spending too much time ranking individuals and not enough time helping them, with too much focus on remediating students' deficits rather than bridging their strengths to other areas of learning. In order to make testing more useful for teachers and students, tests ought to be based on the curriculum and provide regular feedback to inform instruction (Gardner 1991; Glaser 1985)

The purpose of MI types of assessment is to support students on the basis of their complete intellectual profile – strengths and weaknesses. The assessor provides feedback to the student that is helpful immediately, such as suggestions about what to study or work on, pointers on which habits are productive and which are not, and explanations of what is expected. We need to give concrete suggestions and information about which relative strengths the individual student should build upon, quite apart from their ranking within a particular group of students (Gardner 1983)

Stafanakis (1995.79-84) uses the evocative term 'sitting beside', to describe the kind of teacher-pupil relationship that is desirable within MI work, and this notion was at the forefront of my own planning for the project under discussion:

"Imagine a classroom where teachers and students regularly sit beside one another to look at students' work and look at how students do their work to better understand the multiple intelligences of these individuals.

continued ►

This ongoing practice allows teachers and students to be 'co-learners'. When teachers sit next to, instead of in front of students and ask them about their creations, they begin to show that they care to know 'how that individual has made meaning' out of an assignment. The fact that a teacher regularly cares enough to examine an individual student's work and talk to her about it means a great deal to that learner. This makes curriculum building a shared experience for teacher and for student – guided by what teacher and student want to know and want to learn." (p.81)

The Project

The task for us at Nottingham Trent University was to design and deliver, according to MI principles, an initial teacher training course, within a specific framework. It needed to meet the constraints of both the university undergraduate modular system and the syllabus guidelines for the UCLES/RSA Certificate in Teaching English Language to Adults

The aims, both institutional and personal, were:

- To satisfy the demands of the university and of UCLES/RSA;
- To provide a rich and effective educational environment;
- To provide real life tasks for direct, unmediated, assessment;
- To break tasks down into achievable steps;
- To approach content in various ways to suit individual intelligence profiles;
- To vary situations and materials to suit individual profiles;
- To provide a variety of assessment formats;
- To 'sit beside' the learners in the learning process;
- To do the best we can as teachers.

In order to achieve these aims, I adopted both top-down and bottom-up processes. That is, I looked at the course as a whole and what the students needed to achieve to pass and then worked backwards from the assessment criteria. I also worked at the micro level, trying to devise ways of delivering the content through the individual intelligences of the participants. In addition I felt my own role was crucial to the learning process and wanted to create a balance between teacher-led and student-led activity.

The Approach: Micro Level

Taking the micro level first, I looked at suggested 'menu' ideas for the various intelligences. Examples (after Campbell et al., 1992) are:

Linguistic
Conduct a debate on ...
Write an article about ...

Logical-mathematical
Make up analogies to explain ...
Design and conduct an experiment on ...

Bodily-kinesthetic
Create a movement or sequence of movements to explain ...
Bring hands-on materials to demonstrate ...

Visual-spatial
Chart, map or cluster ...
Illustrate, draw, paint or sketch ...

Musical
Give a presentation with appropriate musical accompaniment on ...
Indicate the rhythmical patterns in ...

Interpersonal
Conduct a meeting to address ...
Teach someone about ...

Intrapersonal
Describe qualities you possess that will help you to complete ...
Write a journal entry on ...

I applied such menus to the components of the teacher training course. For example, the following list gives elements of input sessions, with suggested ways of approaching the content through MI means (intelligence types in brackets):

1 The qualities of a good teacher:
Visualisation of a favourite teacher of the past, to music (musical, intrapersonal)

2 The language learner:
'Student persona' cocktail party, where trainees take on another identity and nationality appropriate to a language learner in one of their real or hypothetical classes (interpersonal, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, linguistic)

3 The requirements of the course:
Jigsaw reading with grouping and regrouping (interpersonal,verbal-linguistic, logical)

4 Communication games:
Video viewing and discussion/ devise your own communication game (interpersonal, visual, verbal)

5 Review the last 4 sessions:
Trainee generated pub quizzes (interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical)

6 Form and Function:
Matching form cards with function cards by mingling (logical, linguistic, kinesthetic, interpersonal)

7 Effective grouping and seating:
Give picture of different seating plans to groups of students, they move the chairs according to the plan and move other participants into the chairs, followed by discussion of how students felt in those positions and what activity would be suited to that seating arrangement (interpersonal, kinesthetic, intrapersonal)

8 Word stress:
Mingling exercise matching cards with stress pattern in symbols to individual word or phrase cards, then similar exercise based on stress pattern of individual students' names, creating own words or phrases to suit pattern (emotional, musical, logical, verbal)

9 The Past Tenses:
Physically 'walk through time' along a line drawn on the classroom floor in pairs, afterwards sit down and individually draw several events, then regroup into threes, two talkers and one observer who writes down the past tenses used in the discussion by the other two, follow up with look at grammar book explanations and exercises (interpersonal, intrapersonal, visual, linguistic, logical, bodily-kinesthetic)

The Approach: Macro Level

Taking the macro level next, I looked at the criteria for written assignments and tried to devise 'intelligence fair' assessment. For example, in the UCLES/RSA guidelines, one assignment involves language awareness (linguistic) and another involves teacher reflection (interpersonal). Overall, candidates for CELTA need to write four written assignments, totalling some 3,000 words in total. The word count for each individual assignment is left up to the centres to set. Centres devise their own assignments for these four elements, according to the guidelines. How could I incorporate MI assessment principles in planning the content and rubric for the 'Lessons from the Classroom' and 'Language Related Tasks' assignments? Here is what I decided:

'Language Awareness Assignment:' Vocabulary (800 words)

1. Using the data from your language awareness diary, outline what you found interesting about what you learned about the vocabulary of English. (intrapersonal, verbal/linguistic)

2. .Using some of the recommended reading for this module, discuss ways in which the vocabulary of informal spoken English differs from that of formal written English. (intrapersonal, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic)

3. Enclose a cassette recording of one or two pieces of authentic spoken English which are rich in idiomatic or colloquial expressions. Underline these expressions on a transcript of relevant sections of your data and analyse possible reasons for their use in context. (musical, optional interpersonal, bodily/kinesthetic, logical)

4. What are some of the problems that learners of English as a Foreign Language would face when encountering THREE of the examples you have chosen?' (as above)

'Lessons from the Classroom Assignment: Group presentation (5 minutes per person), backed up by 400 - 500 word written summary

Working as a pair or in a group, and using your observation and teaching practice feedback sheets, make a poster representing in visual form what you have learned from observing yourself and your peers during the process of your teaching practice lessons. Use this poster as the basis for your presentation and write a one page summary for your portfolio.' (interpersonal, visual/spatial, intrapersonal, verbal/linguistic, optional bodily kinesthetic)

The Outcomes

Commentary on Input Sessions:

The activities devised provided for all the group to experience materials and methods appropriate to Gardner's intelligence types. Although not all of them suited everyone, the group was very willing to take part in the activities and to try them out without prejudice. I explained at the beginning of the course that this was a new departure for the Department, that there would be some procedures that would be new or unfamiliar, and that I did not expect everyone to enjoy all of them. I invited the trainees to travel with me on a journey of discovery into a way of teaching and learning which was not the norm for them. In the spirit of adventure, I did not explain until the end of the programme exactly how the aims related to Multiple Intelligences Theory.

Commentary on Language Related Assignment:

The instruction to 'outline what YOU found interesting' about the vocabulary input personalised the assignment for the trainees and encouraged them to select what was relevant to themselves linguistically, but also musically, kinesthetically, emotionally or visually. The instruction to 'use some of the recommended reading' helped to focus trainees on what was needed in terms of assessment criteria and again encouraged them to select what was appropriate to them personally. The instruction to use authentic spoken English is capable of being followed in 'intelligence fair' ways; one 'intrapersonal' trainee used an off-air recording and was quite independent and self sufficient in the way she undertook the assignment, whilst another more 'interpersonal' one chose to get together with a group of peers around a supper table to record a conversation for analysis. The instruction to reflect on the kind of problems that language learners would face with the material from the recording made data gathering relevant to analysis – trainees were working with language with which they had been personally involved, rather than merely studying from a dry text book.

Commentary on Lessons From the Classroom Assignment:

The opportunity to present their content in visual and/or dramatic form helped some trainees with the written work. Collaboration with peers made the exercise more interesting and less solitary for interpersonal trainees, although ultimately the written assignment would be about what was personal to the individual trainee. During the presentation, use could be made of music and movement as well as the visual poster, even though these elements did not form part of the assessment, a fact

continued

which was made clear to the trainees in the course literature.

Trainee Evaluation of the Course:

Here is a selection of comments from trainees. It should be noted that such comments might be received by readers who are not consciously using MI in their courses. Perhaps they are using it unconsciously?

"What I liked most about this course was the friendly, informal atmosphere in all of the lessons; the way everyone bonded together and had a laugh. The background music and style of teaching seemed to help everyone to relax."

"The teaching methodologies were unlike any I have previously experienced, and any initial cynicism soon disappeared. I thought the course was excellent and the teaching a breath of fresh air."

"I liked the way in which there was a lot of variety in the sessions - group work, pair work, discussions, movement around the classroom, etc. It has given me many ideas which will be very useful in the future, and I also think that the methodologies helped to make the atmosphere friendly and relaxed."

"There is nothing negative I could say about the course. It was steady and progressive, even for an intensive course, and I now feel really enthusiastic about carrying on and achieving my CELTA qualification. I am now so confident with the thought of becoming a teacher, something that I felt dubious and unprepared for before."

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A TRAINER LIKE ME

What's your name?

My name is Mary Jane Abrahams, born a long time ago in Santiago, Chile, the longest and skinniest country on Earth. I lived in Venezuela for many years. Got my MA in Curriculum Planning there and had a very enriching experience at Universidad de Carabobo, Valencia where I had the chance to be in charge of the Modern Languages Department for 4 years. In 1990 we decided to return to Chile.

How did you become a teacher trainer?

For many years my only intention was to be a good teacher of English at university level. To be honest I hadn't quite associated the teaching of English with training teachers. Then, in 1992 and all of a sudden, I was asked to work with trainees in their practicum period. Without a second thought I accepted, convinced that it would be a challenging experience. Today I'm in charge of Practicum at Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educacion, which is a pedagogical university. And I also teach language, civilization, etc. at Pontificia Universidad Catolica. The first one is a State university, the students are generally lower middle class and have had very little English. Becoming English teachers is usually a way out of poverty and means a better future for them and their children. At Catolica, which is a very traditional private

university, the students are much better off, some even have their own cars, most of them come from good private schools and have had contact with English studying at language institutes, or with private teachers or travelling.

What do you enjoy about your job?
It's extremely challenging to work with groups that are so different in every possible way and observe how they, through the learning of English and related subjects like Civilization, Literature, Methodology, etc., end up being a lot more homogenous in their ideas about teaching, the relationship with their future students and their responsibility towards their country. I especially enjoy the fact of having to go to schools, meeting and discussing with the real teachers, the ones responsible for so many high school kids that we are so dissatisfied with when they start their first year at university.

What do you need from the groups of teachers you work with?
It would make me immensely happy if the groups of teachers I work with – and here I don't mean my students but my colleagues at both universities – realized that criticizing the students we receive and blaming their high school teachers for their lack of proficiency and fluency is a damning reflection on us, who formed those high school teachers in the first place. I would suggest we take time for deep reflection, individual and collective, to come up with a solid proposal for a new syllabus in order to improve the pre-service training period and reinforce areas like Language and Methodology, together with critical thinking and creativity.

Is there any area you feel guilty not knowing more about?
Yes. Technology is a black hole for me, especially using the computer. What will happen if I press the wrong key? Will everything be erased or messed up forever? And I would also like to know more about evaluation now that the process of learning has become as or more important than the product, and now that students have to use peer and self evaluation. Another important area that pops into my mind is action research. It sounds attractive and productive but I feel very insecure when I think of putting it into practice.

Are there any other questions you'd like to put to yourself and to other trainers who star in this column?
Yes, a couple but for other people as I don't know the answers! What to do with trainees who have reached a certain level (a plateau) of English and are now stagnating? It's very frustrating and many times they give up. And another one is how to give trainees enough confidence for them to overcome their initial stage fright and become more creative and critical?

Do you have a photo of yourself?
Sorry I couldn't get one to you in time!
(If YOU would like to respond to the challenge of answering the questions above in an interesting way that doesn't run over 800 words, please send in your answers to the Editor!)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column picks out publications which are relevant or interesting to modern language teacher trainers and swiftly describes them so that you can gauge if they are interesting enough to look at or buy.

Studies in immigrant English language assessment, Vol. 1, Ed. Geoff Brindley (2000) NCELTR, Macquarie University ISBN 1-86408-547-9. In-depth empirical analyses of aspects of the assessment instruments and procedures used over the past decade in the Adult Migrant English Programme in Australia. Focuses on competency- based assessments of reading, writing and oral interaction.

Good teaching and learning: pupils and teachers speak by C Morgan and G Morris (1999) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-20262-4. Report on a five year research project aiming to capture voices of secondary school pupils and teachers in British comprehensive schools on how they defined key aspects of quality in learning and teaching. Explanations and a few statistics interspersed with quotes.

Standard English Eds. T. Bex and R. J. Watts (1999) Routledge ISBN 0-415-19163-7. Eleven scholarly but accessible contributions on the notion of 'Standard English', historically, internationally, socially, and ideologically.

Classroom decision- making Eds. M. Breen and A. Littlejohn (2000) CUP ISBN 0-521-66614-7. Accounts from teachers who have shared decision- making with their students. The book describes the rationale for 'process syllabuses' and provides examples from primary, secondary, tertiary and teacher education contexts internationally. Different contributors discuss negotiating assessment, negotiation within a national syllabus and the practicalities of negotiation.

Teaching and learning in multicultural schools by Elizabeth Coelho (1998) Multilingual Matters ISBN 1-85359-383-4. The author has experience in multicultural classrooms in Canada. Toronto currently has the largest per capita immigration programme in the world. Nine chapters deal with sources of cultural diversity, public policies, student needs, reception and welcome, assessment and placement, forming a school

continued ——►

community, positive and inclusive class environments, inclusive instructional style, etc. Graphics, text boxes, quotes, examples, resources lists throughout. Recommended.

Handling groups in action by D. Hunter et al. (1999) Gower ISBN 0-566-08272-1. Focuses on the skill of noticing what's missing in a group's interaction and how to introduce missing elements such as fearlessness, compassion, safety, trust, and emotional competence. Each element is described and suggestions are given to help generate it in the group. Good if you have a group that's stuck, unable to agree or unfocused. Large print.

90 brain teasers for trainers by G. Robert-Phelps and A. McDougall (1995) ISBN 0-566-07979-8. Hardback A4 collection of 90 training exercises designed to energise, provoke and challenge your group. Written up in recipe style with appendix of OHP templates.

English Language Teaching Journal on CD-ROM contains over 500 articles and features exactly as they appeared in print from Oct 1981 to Oct 1998 in ELTJ, a quarterly publication from OUP. Once you have installed the CD on your computer (and the support service is prompt and helpful if you have problems) you can access a known article, search for the occurrence of key words, scan the contents page of each issue, read on screen or print out and paste quotations from the text directly into your own work. It costs from £50-68 plus p&p. Available from Niche Pubs UK Ltd, Homerton House, Cawston Rd, Reepham, Norwich NR10 4LT,UK.

Student IT skills by M. Pettigrew and D. Elliott (1999) Gower ISBN 0-566-08053-2. Student readers are encouraged to learn IT by doing and by guided exploration with real-world tasks on their own software and then to develop a framework for their own understanding. Tried and tested with students at Sheffield Hallam University, so the book is unusually clear and bug free.

Helping students to learn by R. Lowes and F. Target (1998) Richmond ISBN 84-294-5447-0. A4 practical guide examines issues in learner autonomy and shows ways it can gradually be introduced in the ELT class. Realistic activities, up-to-date methodology, well laid- out text, photocopiable templates, glossary.

Language teaching awareness by J. Gebhard and R. Oprandy (1999) CUP ISBN 0-521-63954-9. Aims to help teachers explore their own beliefs, attitudes and practices. The text illustrates activities including observation, action research, journal keeping, exploring with a supervisor and gives examples of teachers who have used these. Interesting.

Trends in Dutch teacher education Eds. G. Willems et al (2000) Garant ISBN 90-441-974-7. From the Association of Teacher Educators in the Netherlands (VELON.) This book aims to let other teacher educators around the world know what's happening in the Netherlands in teacher education. The text is a little dense, the translation not always smooth but it is interesting to know what our Dutch colleagues are working on.

Students must write by Robert Barrass (1995) Routledge ISBN 0-415-13222-3. A straightforward, short guide for native- speaking English students of all subjects on the essentials of scholarly writing—choice and use of words, note-taking, writing for tests and exams, giving short talks, etc. Advice on answering questions in coursework and how to prepare essays, term papers and dissertations.

Writing in action by Paul Mills (1996) Routledge ISBN 0-415-11989-8. Practical guide to the process of writing fiction, poetry, drama, autobiography and reports and essays. Focuses on the process rather than the product and so deals with adaptation and editing. Includes illustrative texts and self-evaluation exercises. Written for native-speaking English creative- writing students.

Teaching English spelling by R. Shemesh and S. Waller (2000) CUP ISBN 0-521-63971-9. A resource book including crosswords, picture matching, puzzles and rhymes to keep learners interested while they practice common spelling patterns in English at three levels—beginner, intermediate and advanced. Divided up into units concentrating on particular phonemes. Each unit has a series of lesson plans, background for the teacher, photocopiable practice materials and suggested test words.

Learning and teaching in distance education by Otto Peters (1998) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-28554. An overview of historical developments in distance education and the thinking behind current practice in different cultures. Provides case studies, references and an argument for integrated distance- teaching pedagogics in a hard-back, scholarly volume.

Contrastive rhetoric by Ulla Connor (1996) CUP ISBN 0-521-44688-0. CR is the study of how a person's first language and culture influence their writing in a second language. This book gives an overview of research in the field, draws connections between it and composition studies, cultural anthropology, translation studies and text linguistics. One goal is to make teachers aware of the many factors influencing their students' attempts to compose effective texts.

Thailand by K. O'Sullivan and S. Tajaroensuk (1997) NCELTR, Macquarie University ISBN 1-86408-219-4. What are Thai people really like? What makes them the way they are? How do Thais live? How should you approach Thai people? Answers to these and other questions, based on questionnaire survey results, make this book interesting to all with a professional or personal interest in Thailand.

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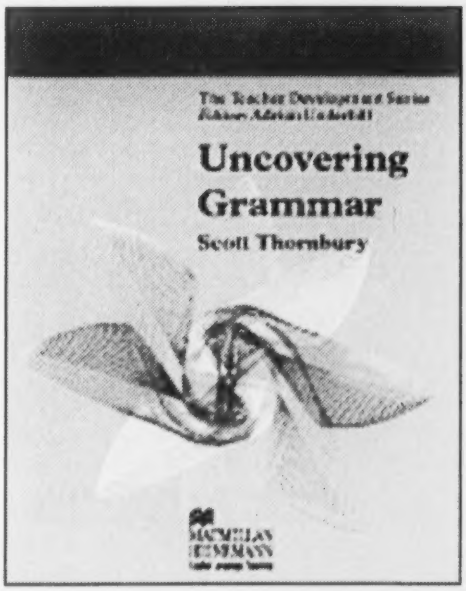

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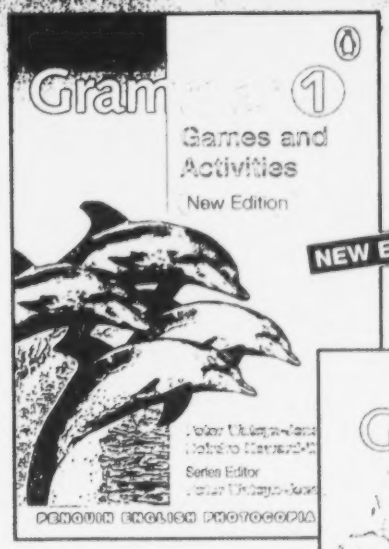

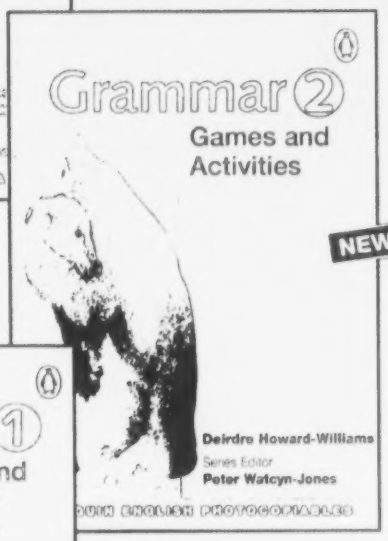

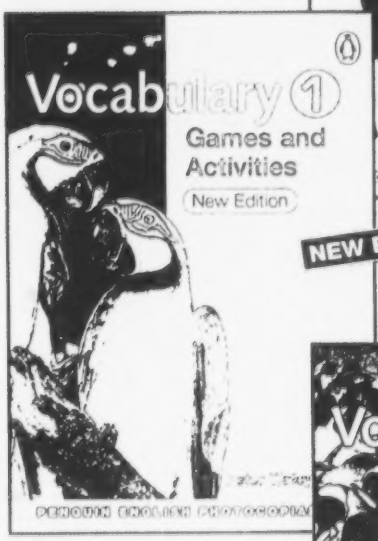

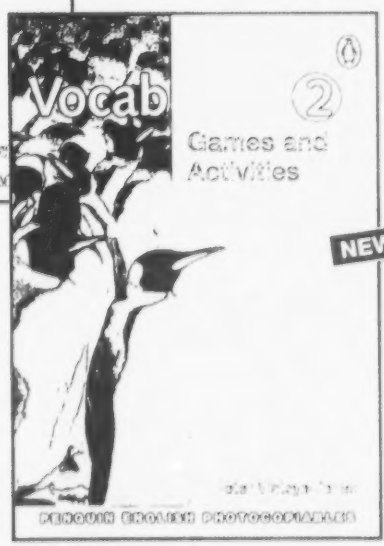

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- Ways we use metaphor in teaching and teacher training 10
- Evaluation by action research 12
- The nightmare of reading difficulty 14
- Trainers make mistakes 15
- Using an introductory FL lesson in TT, three views 18
- Groups work on participant case studies 22
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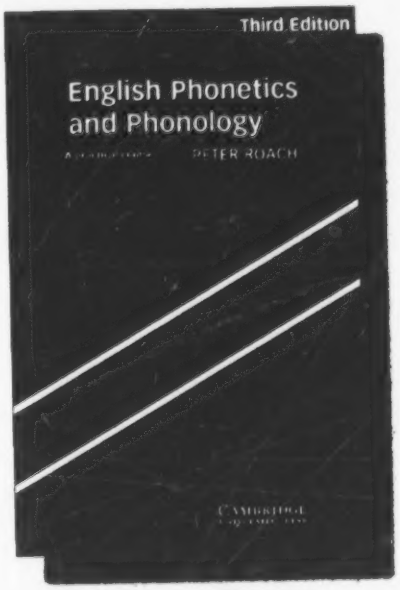

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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

On-line teacher training David Mallows 3

Subscriptions information 5

Trouble -shooting using electronic mail during the practicum: a case study Thomas Farrell 6

Working with metaphors in teaching and teacher training Tessa Woodward 10

Training around the world

Using action research as a means of evaluation on a TT course
Sandra Piai and Kate Threadgold 12

Trainer Background

Dancing letters: the nightmare of reading difficulty Mario Rinvolucri 14

Trainer Mistakes

Looking at my "blind area" Mario Rinvolucri 15

Staying afloat: three perspectives on classroom language learning
Michael Hall and Hazel Sales 18

Process options

Case study envelopes Katie Plumb 22

Publications received 23

Editorial

Welcome to the last issue of Volume Fifteen. In each issue I like to provide readers with a combination of fresh practical ideas for the training classroom, food for thought of a longer term kind and also some inspiring reports by trainers struggling in tightly constrained teacher training and development circumstances. In other words some creativity, some stamina and some integrity!! So, here is what I have for you in this issue...!

David Mallows, tells us why he is a convert to online TT courses in an era when more and more people want to take teacher training qualifications but do not have the money or time for a classroom based course. (Page 3)
Even on otherwise face-to-face courses, there are times when the internet is useful. Thomas Farrell explains how email can support student teachers when they are off campus doing their practical teaching placements. (Page 6)
I used to feel a bit shy about publishing my own work in this journal. In fact for long periods I did not. But many readers have told me that they expect to see something of mine in "most issues" so I'm learning to overcome my reticence. For this issue I have written up some work I have been doing on the usefulness of metaphor in teaching and teacher training. (Page10)

Many readers will know Sandra Piai and Kate Threadgold as joint web page and newsletter editors of the IATEFL Teacher Development SIG. They have contributed an article for this issue on their experience of using action research to assess their TT courses for the Basque government. (Page 12)

Some students, whether in language or teacher training classes, have severe reading difficulties because of problems in visual perception. For background on this condition and possible solutions read Mario Rinvolucri's article (Page 14)
I was also very keen to keep the Trainer Mistakes column going in this issue and so I have printed Mario's article on his own blind spots too (Page 15)

The "introductory foreign language lesson" has been a mainstay on UK TT courses for many years. To find out how the foreign language teacher, the other lecturers and the student teachers felt about one such experience have a look at Michael Hall and Hazel Sales' three- way account (Page 18)

Katie Plumb solves the knotty problem of how to cope with large numbers of very specific participant issues on one short course with a wonderfully practical idea (Page 22). I can vouch for its usefulness as I tried it out all summer and the results were exceptionally good!

As usual, our last text page is filled with thumbnail sketches of publications of interest to teacher trainers (Page 23). My aim here is to give you enough information to tell if the book is for you worth reading or buying.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please do keep in touch by re-subscribing, sending in your articles and comments and letting us know the names and addresses of your colleagues so that we can let them know that we exist.

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward

The Editor

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bWould you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft in on paper typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as a Microsoft Word (98 or lower) or as an ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in **upper and lower case throughout**. Finally, please give an accurate word count. We try to publish your article within about five issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer. It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication. We look forward to reading your article!

ON-LINE TEACHER TRAINING

By David Mallows, UK.

Distance Teacher Education

It has long been possible to take English language teacher-training qualifications through distance education. For example, London, Reading and Birmingham Universities among others offer MA TEFL qualifications through distance modes. The quantity of courses underlines the international nature of our profession and shows both the thirst for personal development and the practical difficulties faced by the vast majority of teachers in finding time for a classroom based course. Distance learning courses normally involve printed, audio or video material sent out to the learner who studies alone and submits assignments for advice and moderation to a tutor. Communication, traditionally by phone or letter is now more commonly carried out by email; this increases the amount and the immediacy of communication between tutor and learner, but the model remains the same. The materials sent out are designed for broadcast (one to many) interaction and the tutor provides one to one support. Many courses require a short induction course or summer school to supplement the individual study. However, by choosing to study this way the many to many interaction which so enriches learning in the classroom is greatly reduced. The experience, perspectives, insights and arguments as well as the social and emotional support of peers is lacking in traditional distance education and means not only that following a distance education course can be a lonely path but that the tendency is for transmission models of education to be followed.

Face to Face Constructivism

The classroom provides for face to face interaction among a group of people, allowing for more constructivist modes of learning to be explored. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of the knowledge, beliefs, and skills an individual brings to the experience of learning. It recognizes the construction of new understanding as a combination of prior learning, new information, and readiness to learn. Constructivist learning is based on students' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity, which they find relevant and engaging. They are "constructing" their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs. The student is pursuing a problem or activity by applying approaches he or she already knows and integrating those approaches with alternatives presented by other team members, research sources, or current experience. Through trial and error, the student then balances pre-existing views and approaches with new experiences to construct a new level of understanding. The process of arriving at 'the academic deliverable' is synergistic, in that learners proactively attempt to achieve learning outcomes greater than the sum of their individual contributions.

The teacher in a constructivist environment is a facilitator or coach, guiding the student, stimulating and provoking critical thinking, analysis and synthesis throughout the learning process.

The success of collaboration relies upon the ability and willingness of co-learners to share resources and accept the importance of the contributions of their peers. The success of a learning environment can be judged against its effectiveness in delivering the conditions for such interaction to take place.

However, the opportunities for constructivist forms of learning are not always exploited fully; often the learner is the most under-used resource. Pressure of time and a drive to standardization of courses leads to the marginalization of collaborative work in which learners learn from each other, in favour of individual study of concepts, theories and practical techniques applied to the individual's teaching situation. A good example of the value of such activities in teacher training is the group feedback sessions, which form part of UCLES CELTA courses. However, there is potential for more collaborative work that would value the learner as a resource and encourage trainees to take as much account of each other as of the course materials. The major drawback to face to face courses is that they are time and place dependent. All the members of the group have to meet at the same time and place for the course to progress. This discourages many people from taking courses as they cannot commit the necessary time or there are not sufficient numbers of interested learners in their area for a course to be viable.

Computer Conferencing

On-line education, particularly that using computer conferencing (CC) provides us with a third domain distinct from those of distance and face to face education. In its most basic form CC is an electronic bulletin board within an online environment (usually following a campus metaphor, each area accessed being referred to as 'conference area', 'common room', 'library' etc.). The tutor gives the students a task which serves to provide a framework for subsequent on-line interaction. Having

PB

presented their position or argument in relation to the readings and to the topic, the learner's comments become interactive, making specific reference to previous notes, agreeing, disagreeing, extrapolating, questioning, illustrating, expanding, and synthesizing upon ideas presented by their peers. As a group, via the conferencing system, they must arrive at and present their findings. They log in (or visit the campus) as regularly as possible to read and contribute to the discussion. The communication is asynchronous, one student may post a message and reply to others one day and another student may access them at a later time.

It is here that CC holds advantages over face to face learning. For some learners it is not easy to join in a real time discussion or debate; they either lack the speed of thought or the confidence. Discussion in a classroom is often dominated by a small number of eloquent, confident students. Online there is the chance for all students to take time to formulate their responses, even to preview them, before posting them. This not only accommodates those who in a face to face setting lack the courage to jump into a discussion but may also lead to deeper processing of material due to the extra time given to reflection. There is always a record of what has been posted in each of the particular threads or discussions. The existence of this textual record of interaction is also a great advantage of using CC. For learners, there is the possibility of reflecting on the thoughts and ideas the group has produced at their own pace as well as returning to the beginning of an argument to clarify or reevaluate positions. This is problematic if not impossible in real time oral collaboration.

"The text-based, archived transcript of the interaction facilitates not only the transmission and sharing of ideas, but opportunities for reflective interaction." Harasim, L (1989:52).

For the tutor the textual record is a resource, which can be used to identify how much each member participated and contributed to the final product. In contrast when groupwork is carried out face to face it is hard to ascertain individual input to the final, joint product.

Collaborative learning

The model most often used to structure online courses is one of collaborative learning. "Collaboration is the process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own. Collaboration creates a shared meaning about a process, a product, or an event." Schrage (1991:40)

For this to happen groups of learners need to be able to interact, share their resources, reflect upon the input of others and incorporate all this into the end product, for which the group is jointly responsible. This 'academic deliverable' could be a report, a syllabus, a lesson plan, a recommendation, an ordered list, a critique or any other product which required discussion among the group and reflection on the issues involved.

CC, with its 'anytime, anyplace' facilities provides the perfect forum for such activities. The logistics of collaborating, such as conflicting schedules, and uneven motivation patterns are greatly eased and furthermore group members are able to contribute when they have something fresh to contribute not think of something fresh to contribute when they happen to be in class.

Access

There are of course problems involved with the use of CC; the primary concern at the moment being one of access. The UK has a rapidly improving IT infrastructure compared to many parts of the world, but not everyone can use the internet regularly enough to be able to participate in an online course. It may take a few more years before we can be sure that access is available to all who want it. Even if a potential learner overcomes this first hurdle there are certain technical skills required which may have to be pre-taught if participants are to use the system to its full capacity. However, neither of these problems is limited to the area of education; they are wider societal issues which will, I believe, be resolved more quickly than we imagine. The information revolution which we see unfolding before us will mean that within a few years the above issues will be less relevant. It is important that we don't sit and wait for full access to arrive before engaging with these technologies or we run the risk of having to adapt ourselves to advances made rather than influencing the directions of those advances.

There is also a real need to ensure that mechanisms for student support are in place both during and after the course. Before the course learners should be made aware of the basic assumptions of this type of course which are based on constructivist learning theories.

Everyone has their own "style" for collecting and organizing information into useful knowledge, and the online environment can be particularly well suited to some learning styles and personality needs. Those who are more used to transmission of information from the lecturer to the learner may find initial difficulties in adapting to online learning.

The online environment also lends itself to a less hierarchical approach to instruction, which meets the leaning needs of people who do not approach new information in a systematic or linear fashion. Participants should also realize the need to log in regularly and the importance of (reasonably) fast and reliable equipment. Finally learners must accept the importance of peer learning and that asking for help is a sign of responsibility, not weakness. During the course, prompt feedback from the tutor or technical support staff on problems encountered by the learners is vital to minimize confusion, anxiety and frustration.

However, probably the greatest obstacle to online learning for most people is the lack of human contact. Body language and facial expressions can play an important role in clarifying and negotiating meaning. In computer conferencing all exchanges are text based and carried out through a computer interface. This can feel

impersonal and may well alienate some learners. However, while appearances and gestures aid expression and the building of relationships, they can also act as a distraction and interfere with the authenticity of a working relationship. Computer Conferencing provides an intellectually pure environment in which the content of the message is not clouded by issues of race, gender etc. Discussions can be, "distilled down to their intellectual component, with all extraneous variables removed." (Quoted in Collis 1997)

A New Domain

CC shares elements with both distance and face to face education. Like Face-to-face education, it facilitates many-to-many interaction; while neither CC nor distance education are dependent on place or time. However, CC is a separate educational domain with a number of distinctive features.

"The key attributes characterising this new domain are that it is an asynchronous (time independent), place independent, many-to-many interactive communication medium. This combination contributes to making on-line education a new and unique domain, distinct from that of face-to-face and/or distance education " Harasim, L (1989:51).
This requires a leap in conceptual thinking if we are to utilize CC effectively. " ..... holding on to a traditional perspective may limit our understanding and realization of the full potential of this new medium." Harasim, L (1989:51).

The pedagogical principles upon which the online environment is built (reflection, collaborative learning and social constructivism) would seem to be ideally suited to enhancing teacher development. The possibility of reflecting at leisure on one's own concepts of teaching before contributing to a developing discussion and receiving measured feedback from your peers rather than just the tutor is something that face to face environments struggle to provide. The discussion in a CC system becomes what the learners make of it; their learning is driven by their own experiences and interests and those of their peers. This shared construction of knowledge is a key element in the success of any online course and could surely be of great use in teacher education.

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Trouble Shooting Using Electronic Mail During the Practicum: A Case Study

by Thomas S C Farrell,
National Institute of Education,
Singapore.

Introduction

Language teacher preparation in many countries consists of course work on a university campus followed by some student teaching (the practicum) in a variety of settings from language institutes on campus to school districts off campus. However, Richards & Crookes (1988) point out that there is a paucity of data on what "exactly takes place during field experiences" (p 22). This article outlines a case study of the direct experiences of one trainee teacher during his practicum in a school district, in Singapore. The case study shows an example of how one supervisor used electronic mail (e-mail) in order to communicate with one of the trainee teachers under his supervision because the trainee was experiencing some problems with one of his classes.

Context

This study took place in Singapore. Singapore has a multi-ethnic population of slightly more than three million people made up of 75.9% Chinese, 15. 2% Malays, 6.5% Indians and 2.4% others (Singapore census, 1990). The teacher was a post graduate diploma in Education (PGDE) student at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. The supervisor is an assistant professor in the same institution. The students in the post graduate diploma in Education (PGDE) program take a 10-month program in which they are exposed to teaching practice and theory classes. Typically, each PGDE (secondary) student undergoes the coursework at the institution followed by teaching practice in a secondary school outside the institution. The NIE is responsible for supervision of this teaching practice.

The Practicum in Singapore

Recently the practicum for the PGDE students has been changed into a Partnership Model. Chellappah, Chiew, and Gopinathan (1999) point out that the new Partnership Model involves more collaboration between the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the schools and also gives the schools more responsibility than before for developing the teachers. Originally, the NIE supervisor conducted three classroom observations and this accounted for about 80% of the trainee's grade. In this new system the supervisor conducts one classroom observation and this accounts for less than 50 % of the grade. The partnership model works as follows: the school principal is in overall charge of the trainee teachers in the school. The principal then appoints a school coordinating mentor (SCM) from the school who takes care of the NIE trainees in the school during their practicum. The SCM will appoint cooperating teachers (CT) to guide each NIE trainee. The SCM also works closely with the NIE supervision coordinator (NSC). The NSC supervises all the trainee teachers in the school and acts as overall coordinator of the practicum. At the end of the practicum period a practicum panel meets to decide the grades of the trainee teachers. This panel is chaired by the school principal and is composed of the SCM and NSC.

Because of the reduction in contact with each trainee teacher, this author, acting as NSC, used e-mail to correspond with the student teachers under his supervision in order to gain insight into their experiences during the period of the practicum. What follows is an account of one case study (because of space limitations) of representative e-mail communications between the supervisor (the author) and one trainee teacher from the PGDE program. I report on this case study because the trainee teacher encountered some problems during his practicum period that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Methodology

The majority of previous studies of English teachers during their practicum have been quantitative in nature. For example, Brinton & Holten's (1989) case study of twenty novice ESL teachers during their ten-week supervised practicum showed how these teachers used dialogue journals to construct and revise their understanding of themselves as teachers. They found that these teachers were concerned with understanding their own classrooms, learning from their mentor teacher, and mastering the art of language teaching. However, they pointed out that a major limitation of their study was that they used quantitative methods exclusively by tabulating the frequency of entries/comments. Brinton & Holten (1989) stated that, "No attempt was made to assess the comments qualitatively" (p. 349). The study reported here is one such attempt to assess the comments of one trainee teacher during his practicum period.

Consequently, qualitative research procedures were used in the collection and analysis of the data (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). With this approach the emphasis in collection and analysis of data was on understanding and interpretation. For interpretation, I consulted the teacher to make sure my interpretations were correct. The full period of data collection was nine weeks (the practicum period). Data were collected by means of e-mail 'discussions', telephone calls, one open-ended interview (at the end of the semester), and my written up log.

Under this Partnership Model each supervisor was to be responsible for all the trainee teachers in one school, regardless of subject. I had twelve trainee teachers under my supervision in three schools. In order to keep up with what each trainee teacher was experiencing during his or her practice teaching, I asked each trainee to communicate with me on e-mail during the entire practicum period. This was voluntary and they could write whenever they wanted and use any format they felt comfortable with. What follows is an outline of e-mail 'discussions' I had with one NIE trainee teacher (Tan, a pseudonym) throughout his practicum period. This trainee teacher was teaching in a neighborhood secondary school in Singapore for six weeks as part of his practicum period.

Tan's Practicum Experience (Vignettes)

Tan was teaching English language and History in a neighborhood (government funded) school during his practicum. Tan communicated early in his practicum period that he was experiencing some problems; in fact, the first entry in his e-mail 'journal' was during the first week of his teaching. He wrote:

> *The first, and so far, only class I've had with the Secondary 2 [mid-level] class was a minor disaster. At first, half the class went to the far side of the classroom, and disregarded me. Then the other more interested half got infected, and tuned out. It didn't help that one pupil would stroll up and down, talking to them.*

But he was not too alarmed and was still ready to teach. He wrote:

> *Well, I'm not really disappointed, since I had expected this. The mischievous element are deliberately being provocative, and so far I've had to confiscate 2 rubber bands, some paper darts, a lighter, and a pencil case that was being used as a rugby ball.*

The following week he wrote that he was concerned about one pupil's behavior and this pupil was evidently going to be a constant challenge for him throughout his teaching practice. He wrote: "There is also one pupil who has psychopathic tendencies, and they tell me not to raise my voice at him. Even the other pupils leave him alone." I was also becoming alarmed with the difficulties he was experiencing and telephoned him about the class. I expressed my alarm that he was given such a class to teach during his practicum and suggested he inform the SCM and the cooperating teacher about this class. He said that he was reluctant to admit to the SCM that class management was beyond his control because it may adversely effect his grade (he was aware that the schools have most power to influence grading within the new system). I asked him if I should call the SCM and he asked me to wait for a while.

However, things did not get better quickly. The following week he wrote that the 'problem' class, although responsive somewhat to the content of the lessons, was nevertheless, getting very difficult to control. He wrote: "In short, this situation is now completely beyond my classroom management capabilities, though I am undaunted in the aspect of content instruction. At least they still hand in their exercise books." This was also the time for me to make my one classroom observation under the new system. I could have chosen any of his classes to observe; however, he requested (by phone) that I observe the problem class as he said it might help him control them more. He obviously needed a confidence boost for teaching this class at this stage of his practicum. I agreed to visit this class and the day before the visit he wrote:

> *Could you make your entrance as surreptitiously as possible (i.e. by the back door), as they tend to be on their better behavior when someone new appears? That's what they did to me, the first time...Thanks for being so sympathetic and supportive on the phone that day!*

I then visited the class and observed him teach. The exact details of the observation remain confidential (because of school policy); however, I shared Tan's perceptions about the nature of misconduct within his class even when I was there as an official observer. I sent him an e-mail after the observation in which I shared my concern about the disruptive nature of some of the students in the class; I also suggested he ask the SCM for more help:

> *I have been thinking a lot about your class and I am happy to have had a chance to see the disruptive nature of the students. I also worry about why you do not disclose your full frustrations [to theSCM] with the problems of this class (this is what I am here for too!). If you don't at this stage (because you think you SHOULD be able to handle this?), you may become burned out too early in your teaching life!*

Journal Exchanges

"The Teacher Trainer" has arranged journal exchanges with

IATEFL Newsletter (UK)
English Language Teaching Journal (UK)
Modern English Teacher (UK)
RELC Journal (Singapore)
Teacher Education Quarterly (USA)
Forum (USA)
TESOL Matters (USA)
English Teaching Professional (UK)

and is abstracted by 'Language Teaching', The British Education Index, the ERIC clearing house and Contents Pages in Education.

Tan replied that he was still trying to figure out what to do with the class. He was especially interested in trying to help 'save' the students who wanted to study but were bullied by the other disruptive ones. He wrote:

> *Re the [problem] class, well, I'm still trying to work out a viable solution. My priority is still to save those I believe are interested in studying. So this Wednesday I have arranged to meet some of these pupils in the canteen after class hours.*

Four students turned up (out of forty-two) for the meeting and two of them had forgotten their textbooks, so he was disappointed and decided to stop the extra lessons. He wrote:

> *Only four students turned up today for the 'extra class' I planned for that class. I thought it was not worth continuing the class, especially as two did not bring their textbooks.*

He felt frustrated at his inability to get through to the pupils and blamed himself for this problem. He wrote:

> *I am so furious, and defeated, by their [the pupils] apparent foolishness and shortsightedness. I wish I could wake them up somehow, but I don't know how. This goes beyond their academic performance; they are screwing up their lives, and that of their hapless and more conscientious classmates'.*

I (as his supervisor) had informed the SCM about the problems Tan was having with this particular class. I made several suggestions to the SCM that she could institute with the 'problem' class: (1) she could video-tape the class and show the results to the parents asking them to take action with their children. (2) She could invite parents in to see what is going on in the classroom during lessons, especially the parents of the pupils who want to learn but are not 'allowed' by disruptive pupils. Alternatively, regarding the placement of a trainee teacher in such a class, I strongly suggested that a cooperating teacher be present at all times while Tan was teaching. However, in this case, the SCM informed me that the original teacher was on sick leave and so another teacher would have to be taken from somewhere else to 'supervise' Tan while he was teaching.

Nevertheless, Tan told me that he was getting good support from all levels of teachers in the school. For example, regarding the role the SCM, the CT's and other teachers in the school played, Tan wrote that all were very helpful to him:

> *They [SCM, the CT's and other teachers] also have been most cooperative; my [subject] CT helped me get out of a mess (during one of her observations) when my pacing went way too fast. She gave me extra material to tide over the extra time. My mentor [SCM] has also observed me, and has given me tips regarding closure of lessons. Generally I've been given a lot of advice regarding both lesson planning and execution, and interaction with pupils.*

He also pointed out that the school was aware of the problems that this class were causing, and that other teachers had been having a lot of problems with the same class. He wrote about this:

> *The other teachers also have trouble with the class, and several of them have been driven to tears, so I guess they treat me with some sympathy as to my experiences. The principal and VP have been called in to deal with the situation. I think there is some sort of special program being considered now.*

Discussion

Doyle (1977) says that learning to teach involves "learning the texture of the classroom and the sets of behaviors congruent with the environmental demands of that setting" (p. 31). The teacher trainee, Tan, was made aware of classroom routines, issues of classroom management and student/teacher rapport during his practicum. In his quest to survive, Tan had to devise different strategies to manage his class. Although the discipline problems in the problem class did not disappear, nevertheless, Tan was not defeated by the experience. On the contrary, he said he learned a lot from the pupils' reactions (or non-reactions) and about how to cope with such a disruptive class. Tan also learned about teaching in a real setting. His 'reality shock' (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1985) was severe, and as such, it was important for me as supervisor to monitor and encourage this trainee teacher through his 'shock'. It was important to monitor this problem situation because the 'reality shock' can destabilize already anxious teachers and have adverse effects beyond their practice teaching (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1985).

It should also be noted that his other classes had gone very well. His only problems in a higher level English class concerned the number of writing assignments he had given them. It seems that the students were not happy with the amount of assignments he was giving. He wrote:

> *Re setting too many writing lessons, my sec 3 class groaned last week, when for the 3rd time in a row, I gave them a writing assignment. No doubt they were mostly doing in-class work, but I guess they are not too fond of writing lengthily [for long periods or many pages].*

From a supervisor's point of view, I can say that I would probably not have known what was going on in such detail had I not kept up contact with Tan by e-mail throughout the practicum period. E-mail communications enabled me to keep updated on what was developing during this trainee teacher's practicum. Additionally, when I went to the final meeting arranged by the practicum panel (as outlined in the Partnership Model), I was able to take part in the discussion about Tan's experiences with this problem class and his final grade. Had I followed usual routine, I would only have had experienced one classroom observation with the occasional contact by e-mail and/or phone.

Tan also gained by having to e-mail his supervisor regularly. He knew that he had a ready 'listener' if he required one. He (and my other trainees) knew that they could have e-

mailed me at any time to discuss any issue related to the practicum. I can only speculate, but it may have been the informal nature of e-mail communications that encouraged this trainee teacher to seek advice for a difficult problem he was facing during his practicum. Additionally, it may have been the immediacy of e-mail communications during the practicum period that facilitated sustained discussions between the supervisor and the trainee. Tan wrote that the use of e-mail for him during the practicum was very reassuring, especially as he had one disruptive class. He wrote:

> *E-mailing supervisors as a means of keeping in contact, quite simply is absolutely invaluable. It's far more convenient and versatile than leaving messages on answering machines. Probably the greatest advantage it has is the psychological reassurance it gives to the trainee. It allows a 'conversation' to take place at both persons' convenience, so it is reassuring to the trainee that he does not have to worry about catching the supervisor at the right time.*

Tan used the e-mail communications with me as a 'scaffold' (Brinton and Holten, 1989, p. 350) to discuss his understanding of a problem situation.

Even though communication via e-mail is convenient for both supervisor and trainee teacher, however it must also be pointed out that these types of discussions are not without their problems. One such problem involves the issue of disclosure. Some teacher trainees may be reluctant to share their problems for fear that this would reflect negatively on their grades. Tan had such a worry that his failure to control a class (that other more experienced teachers could not control either) could have reflected negatively on his final grade. He wrote about this:

> *I was sounding out the idea [of informing the SCM about his problems with the class] with another teacher, who has been a CT before. She says that such a suggestion might not reflect well on my practicum performance, since such an act would certainly mean that I've completely lost control of my class. I am now a lot less keen on the idea than I was.*

Another real problem supervisors could encounter with e-mail communications is the possibility of volumes of 'discussions' and thus an increase in the supervisor's workload. That was the case for me and I am not sure how to control this potential problem. Perhaps focused writing on specific topics related to teaching practice could keep the communications from becoming too vague. Regardless of these problems with e-mail communications, I would suggest that supervisors institute a similar system of communication with the trainee teachers under their supervision. By having trainee teachers communicating via e-mail, supervisors can monitor experiences closer than if such communications were carried out via the telephone or by postal mail.

Conclusion

This case study illustrates the potential e-mail discussions have for giving supervisors insights into the perceptions of student teachers' experiences while on teaching practice. It also shows the potential of this form of communication for trainee teachers to reflect on their teaching practice. Even though the partnership model permitted me to conduct only one classroom observation, I was able to have regular and sustained communications with most of my trainee teachers on teaching practice. In this way, I could keep up to date with the development of the trainees under my supervision. The trainees seemed to benefit from the e-mail communications as well. Tan, especially, was able to reflect on his problem situation and develop as a teacher. However, certain drawbacks about this form of communication (such as confidentiality of disclosure, and the possibility of vast quantities of e-mails) should be considered carefully before teaching practice begins. With these issues settled, trainee teachers may be able to honestly discuss the joys and problems of teaching practice in a mode convenient for supervisors and teacher trainees.

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Working with Metaphors in Teaching and Teacher Training

by Tessa Woodward, UK

Metaphors...what they are and where we find them

We could take a very basic definition of metaphor as being, " the stating of one thing in terms of another". Thus I can say, as poets do, that my love is an onion or that the rain has small feet. But we also know, from our own experience and from the marvelous perspective given us by Lakoff and Johnson in "Metaphors we live by", that metaphors are not just an unusual, special device found in poetry but are fundamental to our way of thinking and understanding in everyday life. Let me just reach out for the book I have on my desk at the moment. The back cover blurb says...

"The way forward..."(the metaphor here is that life and time are paths) and, "This book establishes a new agenda...".(The book is a meeting). "We need to build and maintain the British brand of the English language." (The country and language are marketable products)

Next, I'll look at an old newspaper. "Clinton and Blair came out firing against the worst their enemies could throw at them." (Politicians are seen as soldiers at war. Words as weapons.). Metaphors are everywhere...in newspapers and conversations, on the radio and in books. They are ubiquitous, natural and fundamental to our way of thinking, communicating and understanding the world and its problems and joys. So, let's consider how some of our colleagues are using them in teacher training.

Metaphor as a way of describing and evaluating a lesson

Simon Marshall (1996), working with pre-service trainees feeling rather tongue-tied when using new professional terminology, asks them to think about the lesson they have just taught and to write it down as if it was a walk in the country or a car journey. Here's a tiny snippet from one "walk description".

"My walk
There were black clouds everywhere. I couldn't see past them. Sometimes there would be a glimmer of light but it would soon disappear ....There would also be moments when it got quite windy and this made it feel as if my head was spinning. When I reached the end of my walk I felt as if I was still walking."

This trainee commented on the idea of using metaphor to describe a lesson as "interesting and actually quite therapeutic. Somehow it seemed to distance me from the stress and nervousness that I feel about this new experience and that can only be beneficial!".

Changing our own metaphors as a way of understanding our professional world better

Dave King (1998) started reading about Chaos Theory when he was a director of teacher training. Chaos Theory, simply put, states that you can't really predict what exact effect your own decisions will have since everything is connected, directly or indirectly to everything else. While reading he found that he had had an unconscious view of his organisation as being a sort of machine with himself as a cog in it fitting in a certain place. He writes, " The machine metaphor fits well with a universe that is predictable. Even unpredictability can be seen in machine terms, malfunctioning or broken parts, be those broken parts people or organisational structures, leading to breakdowns." King continues, "Personally, I found it difficult to switch to another form of metaphor,...I needed a metaphor from the natural world which would show that a single cause leads to lots of effects-effects which can be distant in time and place....
So, now I am a fish. A fish in an ocean. The ripples caused by the decisions of myself and others spread far and wide, leading to effects distant in time from the causes and as they interact with other ripples from other decisions, the effects become more and more unpredictable."
So here we have a colleague deliberately making himself a new metaphor so that he can gain an additional perspective on his work.

Metaphor as shaping the way we see our problems and solutions

Donald Schon, so well known in our circles for his books about the reflective practitioner, was also interested in the metaphors people use when describing a problem and generating solutions for it.

In Schon (1979), we learn that the way we look at a problem will depend on our underlying metaphor for it. The solutions we look for will also depend on the metaphor we have chosen. Thus, to go back to King above, if we think of our organisation as a machine and if something goes wrong with it, we may well think of solutions that have to do with getting spare parts in, or spending money on bringing in outside experts to fix things.

My own recent adventures with metaphors

Over the last few years I have been having some adventures of my own involving metaphors.
First, I have invited experienced teacher trainers to

describe recent courses they have run in terms of metaphor. Two memorable results are:

"The juke box that went wrong " (and which hurled out more and more golden oldie ideas, faster and faster, as the course came towards the end and the hungry teachers had to go home and the trainer worked desperately to keep them satisfied).

"The hot air balloon" (that provided a swift overview of many areas of teaching. When participants expressed particular interest in an area the balloon came down and they all looked at it more closely).
Once a trainer or teacher has found a metaphor to describe a course, there is usually laughter or an "Ah Ha!" moment and the recognition of an insight into how to change things in future.

Secondly, I scan for metaphor when experienced teachers discuss their work. The discussion might have been prompted by, for example, drawing a professional development graph or observing some teaching and then finding similarities between it and the teacher's own work. I listen intently for any metaphors that come up. If I hear one, I repeat it back to the teacher and ask if they would like to explore it. Here's an example of the sort of conversation that might then ensue.

T. I feel a bit stale.
Me. Stale.
T. Mmmmm
Me. What kind of things get stale apart from teachers?
T. Loaves . Big, white, unsliced, old loaves. Oh! that's funny..actually, the building where I work is a big, white building!
Me. OK. Big white unsliced loaves. Where are they?
T. On the shelf. They've been there ages. Horrible!
Me. On the shelf.
T. That's funny too! Actually I'm married!
Laughter
T But it's a waste isn't it?
Me. A waste of what?
T. The bread, time, me, my lifetime!
Me. Hmmm
Pause
Me. Okay so you have this horrible, big, white, stale thing. What can you do with stale white loaves?
T. I could make a bread and butter pudding with it.
Me. How do you do that ?
T. Well, you start by chopping the bread up into manageable pieces. Then you mix it with other things...milk, raisins, nutmeg, nutritious things and add a bit of spice. Yes, I could make a bread and butter pudding. Plus the family likes that too.
Me. The family likes it?
T. Yeah! Oh gosh it sounds like I'm tied to my family.
Me. Well you're in one. It would be crazy not to think of them.
T. Gosh! What have I said?
Me. You said you could chop up the bread into manageable chunks.
T. You know I never really wanted to be full time. I always wanted to be part time
Me. And mix it up with other things. Some interesting, spicy things!
Laughter
T Well, I'm not getting into that!
Me. You also said the family would be happy with that too.
Long silence
T. Thanks that's really helpful!

When asked again about this conversation six months after it happened, the teacher said "I was amazed at the speed of the insights. I wasn't in a trance. I wasn't invaded. It was just very, very helpful. And enjoyable!

What's happening here?

I think that when we start, usually quite unconsciously, to use a metaphor to talk about an issue or a problem, our mind is giving us a hint about how it wants to work on the problem. Our own self is giving us a hint about how we can work on an issue. If we take the hint, the way in, and follow the metaphor, fleshing it out thoroughly to see what it means, we can usually get quite far in understanding and solving a problem.

The important thing is for the person who voluntarily comes up with the initial metaphor to be the one that gently uncovers its significance. Others can offer ideas but it must be the originator of the metaphor who chooses to accept or reject the offerings. Only that person can judge the significance and usefulness of the conversation.

Can you do this with and for yourself? Yes. Just the other day someone asked me how I felt about a particular kind of work I was doing. I heard myself saying that, at first, I had felt "out of my depth", that now I had "found a raft and it floats " but that I still didn't feel very good about the work. After the conversation I had a good long think about the metaphor I had used and what it meant. I came to a much better understanding of the work and of my own reaction to it as a result.

I have mentioned a few ways in which colleagues and I are using metaphor to help us in our work. If you'd like to read more, try:

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Much of this article started life as a talk at a conference at International House, London in 1998.

Using Action Research as a Means of Evaluation on a Teacher Training Course

by Sandra Piai and Kate Threadgold
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Introduction

We have been using Action Research as a means of evaluation for the past ten years on many of our Teacher Training courses for the Basque Government. The most demanding of these courses is the Diploma course which gives teachers a state recognised qualification of 'specialist' teacher, ie Specialist English Language Teacher. To successfully complete this course, all teachers have to undertake a piece of action research.

The present diploma is a language and methodology course and is offered to practising primary teachers not all of whom have experience of teaching English. The course is made up of 500 hours, 400 of which are face to face sessions, 330 hours full time between September and December and another 70 hours in weekly evening sessions from January until June. After the Christmas break teachers return to their schools and resume working. They are required to teach a minimum of 70 hours of English between January and June, and for many this is their first experience of teaching English. It is during this phase that the course participants undertake a piece of action research which is the final part of the course evaluation.

During the course, evaluation takes the form of continuous assessment of all four skills plus a written and an oral exam at the end of the intensive phase. Teachers who do not reach the required minimum level of language, ie a level equivalent to The Cambridge Examination in English for Language Teachers (CEELT 1), have the opportunity to retake both parts of the exam the following June. In addition to language, a number of methodology-based tasks are set during the year the largest and most important of which is the action research project. In other words, action research is one of the ways, if not the main way, we evaluate the methodology component on our course.

Developing the Action Research

At the beginning of the course, the language and methodology input is very intense and a balance is kept between the two, even though teachers invariably ask for more language. Time is built into the course for teachers to work both on their language needs and on a series of practical classroom tasks. These tasks serve as a link between the course content and the classroom, and the participants' experience and teaching situations are used as starting points for discussion so as to increase the amount of 'bottom up' training and reduce the 'top down' transmission of ideas, in line with much of the current theory and practice on teacher training courses (Kennedy 1988, Breen et al 1989 and Lamb 1995). Moreover, if teachers are given time to work on practical classroom-based tasks, including planning and materials preparation, they are often more willing to experiment with new ideas in the classroom as they have already invested time and energy in developing these ideas (Palmer 1993). We hope in this way to reduce teachers' resistance to, and rejection of, new ideas as far as possible, and develop what Bush (1995) calls "ownership" of change. Besides, these smaller tasks help teachers get used to planning and presenting a rationale which they will need to be able to do when writing up the action research.

Throughout the course teachers are also expected to keep reflective diaries in which they reflect on the language and methodology encountered in the sessions as learners, and which then turn into teacher diaries when they return to their classrooms. They are thus encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice and the success or otherwise of the implementation of new ideas. Class time is given for sharing reflections and discussion. This diary-keeping will later become an important component in the presentation of the results of the action research as well as being a valuable tool for 'supporting teacher learning' (Jarvis 1992).

The final stage of the course, is the implementation of an innovation. It is undertaken during a period of three or four weeks and includes collecting data, as well as writing up the results and the teacher's reflections; in other words it is a piece of action research. Using action research gives teachers a **real** reason for trying out, and reflecting on, ideas and activities they have been introduced to on the course. It also provides that extra incentive to transfer some of these ideas to the classroom in the form of an innovation. During this last phase, teachers attend weekly seminars where course time is spent working on the necessary skills for undertaking and writing up a research project, such as questionnaire writing, collecting data, presenting results, citing quotations, writing bibliographies, etc. Each participant also receives written guidelines on how to write up their action research as well as three hours of individual tutorials and generally as much support as they need, either from their personal tutor or the course director.

Despite all the training and preparation, implementing action research is still very difficult for some teachers.

Over the years action research topics have been wide and varied, although exploiting and using stories or games in the classroom are often the most popular choices. Naturally some teachers like to play safe and use techniques such as storytelling, which they have already used in teaching Basque as a second language. Others adapt previously used ideas such as games, but now the games have the aim of generating language. Nevertheless, some research in the past has been on really innovative topics such as Classroom Dynamics, Reinforcing English through Physical Education, Making the Students the Protagonists in a Remedial Class, Learning Geography in English, Developing Pupils' Skills through Use of Posters and other Media, and Developing Listening Strategies to build up Self-Esteem.

A Tool for Evaluation

Using action research as a means of evaluation gives the course greater validity in terms of a practical teaching qualification as well as producing a lot of positive washback in terms of developing reading and writing, and reflective skills, and overcoming the fear of innovating. In addition, it is completely based on the teachers' needs and requirements and therefore pulls together much of the training and input of the course. It also has the added advantage that it is not a one off 'jumping through hoops' to impress the observer but is a long term project involving planning, materials production, investigation, reflection and, of course, teaching.

Problems Encountered

However, action research is not without its problems. Comments from participants' reflections indicate that it is often very time consuming. One teacher wrote: *"As a teacher it seems to me that it has been quite hard to carry out this action research because of the lack of time. Besides, taking into account that I am not used to working in this way, it has been a great effort. It has been harder than I expected."* This experience is reflected again in the feedback where teachers talk about the disruption not only to their classroom routines but also to their home life. One teacher warned *"an incredible amount of time for planning is required."* Another really resented the amount of time she felt she was being deprived of spending with her family. In fact, teachers often see it as a huge and intimidating task at first, and describe the experience as quite stressful.

Successes

On the other hand, participants state that once they have got started much of the initial apprehension disappears. Success speaks for itself in that the majority of teachers are surprised, delighted, sometimes elated at the results. One teacher reported excitedly on the positive results of her work: *"I have never felt so happy observing how my pupils were relaxed and confident doing the activities, besides, every day they were waiting with anxiety the English class."* Another teacher similarly reported: *"All of them answered 'yes' when I asked if they would like to do more activities like those we did."*

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The teacher who wrote that she had resented the disruptions to her family life wrote in her conclusions: *"At the beginning I was a bit afraid as I didn't have any experience teaching English, but I have to say that after several months working on the assignment it is both very hard and very rewarding..... I learnt a lot about children in pre-infant school: what interests they have; their psychological development; how they work in L2 (Basque)."* *(English for these children is their third language.)* She commented not only on the positive results of her work, (her pupils were really communicating in English!), but also on the increased motivation in the classroom: *"I asked them if they thought that they had learnt something doing these activities and 100% said 'yes'."*

As one of the quotes above shows, action research, although carried out in the English classroom, has knock-on effects in other areas of the curriculum. And, for most, despite the anxiety at the beginning, it turns out to be a very rewarding experience. *"I felt very happy when I could see that they were participating, cooperating, helping others with great interest and having fun while acting, being recorded and watching themselves on TV, and this is really the most rewarding of all."* Most teachers leave the course with a high sense of achievement, which they take back into their schools and classrooms. The same teacher wrote: *"If you are in doubt about what you are doing, don't panic, at least you will achieve something positive from the experience."*

Conclusion

Whether the teachers ever innovate again we can only presume but, when asked, by far the majority say that they feel that they could and write as much in their recommendations to other teachers. Certainly many innovations become incorporated into teaching repertoires, as one teacher said: *"After demonstrating with activities for speaking I am going to introduce them into my teaching practice in order to become part of the teaching learning process"*, and the growth in confidence is enormous making it obviously worthwhile: *"I think sharing experiences with colleagues is a good way to feel confident and learn from each other."* Teachers from previous years' courses still come in to see us and tell us what they are doing and what further innovations they have tried out.

To sum up, we therefore feel that action research has the following advantages:

- it is experiential learning
- it brings the course alive by making real links between theory and practice

continued

- it gives the trainer "access" to what is going on in the teachers' classrooms
- it trains the teachers to be more analytical and gives them the tools to be so
- it is productive (teachers come away from the course with a project which can be adapted and used again in the classroom)
- it has important knock-on effects in terms of preparing teachers to set up other such projects in the future and it often has a positive influence on colleagues in their schools
- it gives an able teacher with a lower language level the chance to do as well as colleagues with better English
- it allows teachers a certain amount of flexibility to follow areas of interest, ie it gives them the chance to choose what topic they want to work on and how they want to go about it

and, most importantly, **it helps teachers overcome the fear of innovating.**

When we first started running courses for the Basque Government course content was not as clearly stipulated as it is today. Over the years that we have been using action research and sending feedback, both from ourselves as tutors, and from the course participants, the Basque Government has slowly become more specific in terms of the criteria it sets for its courses. This year for the first time it has stated that any course of this size must include an action research project. Surely this tells us something?

* quotes are taken directly from teachers' written reflections of their action research and have not been edited.

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TRAINER BACKGROUND

Dancing Letters: The nightmare of reading difficulty

Some people can experience distortions when they look at materials particularly text. The distortions include blurring, movement of letters, words doubling, shadowy lines, shapes or colours on the page and flickering. These distortions are characteristic of a condition that some have called Meares-Irlen (or Irlen, or Scotopic Sensitivity) Syndrome.

Mario Rinvolucri writes:

"Imagine the nightmare for a ten-year old with this kind of visual perception being asked to read aloud in class. Imagine what it must be like for a Russian or Arabic-speaking learner trying to cope with the strangeness of western script as it leaps and cavorts all over the shop. Imagine not realising that other people just see orderly rows of static print.

Over the last thirty years, among the hundreds of people I have taught English to, there must have been a sizeable minority with this (dis)ability. How often have I been impatient with dancing letter students? I must certainly have often set them reading tasks and been unaware of the difficulty of what I was asking them to do. Had I been aware of the unstable text problem at least I could have been more understanding. Had I been aware of the solution, I could have done something to help. Now I can.

I have obtained the transparent coloured overlays that dancing letter people can put over text to stabilise the print. All the person has to do is to choose from 20 colours and find, by trial and error, which colour or colour combination (two overlays, one on top of the other) does the best stabilising job for them.

In the workshop where I learnt the overlay solution, three out of 20 of us had the Meares-Irlen Sydrome, with reading headaches, blurring of the letters, difficulty in keeping their pace and poor concentration. Once each had chosen the right overlay for them, all three reported a startling improvement. We heard one of them reading first with his overlay and then without. The overlay reading was fast and expressive, while the unassisted reading was slower, more hesitant and with much less expression.

"Of course", he said, "without the overlay, the letters started leap-frogging around again."

It was wondrous and moving to see three people in their forties suddenly finding a solution to a chronic, hampering problem. One reported that the next day he read 30% more than he normally would have and felt a great deal less strain.

How widespread is some version of this syndrome? According to research done in Norfolk, UK, up to 50% of children in some of the country's primary schools found that

their intuitively chosen overlay improved the clarity of print, and about half these children (25% of the total) continued to use them without teacher prompting for up to three months.

How will I use my knowledge? In language classes, I will tell students that I once had a learner who reported that he found reading in English difficult because the text would not keep still. I will ask them if they know of anybody with this kind of reading perception. (The indirect approach is useful when you are trying to find out about a potentially embarrassing deficit.) I will then offer the overlays to help them tackle English texts.

Note

The Meares-Irlen Syndrome testing pack, including a set of overlays, is available from The Institute of Optometry, 100 Marketing, 56-62 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6DS, England. Find out more about the use of overlays in UK schools from County Sensory Support Service, c/o Heartease High School, Marryat Road, Norwich NE7 9DF, England. Tel +44 (0)16 03-43 57 09. An informative web site is: http://www.essex.ac.u/psychology/

Thanks

With thanks to English Teaching Professional for allowing me to reprint extracts from Mario Rinvolucri's article in issue 8, July 1998, and to Professor Arnold Wilkins, Head of Visual Perception at the University of Essex and to I.O.O. Marketing (see above) for letting me try out the testing packs and overlays for myself. The Editor.

Useful Websites

www.internet-course-finder.com
Free access to the world of learning and skills (says the press release)

www.language-course-finder.com
6.500 language centres teaching 75 different native languages to foreign students in 85 countries

www.dlcoursefinder.com
60,000 e-learning courses offered by universities and colleges in 131 countries

Our Sister Magazine

Pilgrims runs a web magazine for teachers called Humanising League Teaching. You can find it at **www.hltmag.co.uk**. It is free and aims to provide EFL teachers with "practical techniques as well as overarching ideas". The magazine is currently edited mostly by Mario Rinvolucri. An attractive feature of the webzine is that its editorship moves around the world from the UK to Uraguay, Poland, Brazil and other places. Take a look!

TRAINER MISTAKES

Looking at my "Blind Area"

Mario Rinvolucri, UK

The Spring issue of the TTT (Vol. 15 No.1) brought us a revival of the section of the journal in which trainers talk about their mistakes. I read what the two writers had to say with interest and also with a twinge of iffiness: does this take us back to early Christian public confessionals?

No, the usefulness of the column to me is not what these folk manage to say about themselves, it is what they manage to say about me, without knowing it. If I can recognise some of my own errors in the work of others, and then think about myself, I have bypassed some of my ego defences.

Then, suddenly the Johari Window came to mind. Which area of the Johari Window were these two people writing about? Let me remind you of what the the Johari Window looks like:

	known to self	**not known to self**
known to others	1. Public area of activity. Public self	2. Blind area for me. "They know, I don't"
not known to others	3. Area of private self hidden from others.	4. Unknown area Unconscious to me and to others

(The Johari Window was dreamt up by **Joe** and **Harry/hari,** respectively
Luft and Ingham. See *Group Processes: An introduction to Group dynamics ,*
Joseph Luft, National Press Books, 1970.)

I felt that the writers in the Spring issue were mainly in Area 1 the " known to me and known to the trainees" area, and that, maybe, other parts of the Johari Window are more rewarding to explore.

To my mind, area 4 is the most challenging, as an investigation here demands delving into places in the unconscious which are normally off-bounds. People who have worked with Bernard Dufeu (Teaching Myself, OUP, 94) in the context of teacher sensitivity training, have unearthed some amazing things from their area 4. It is, for example, startling for a teacher to realise that she sometimes makes unconscious demands on her students and can become upset and confused when they fail to deliver on these demands, though she has never made them explicit and does not even know about them herself. *"I am angry with you for failing to do what I never asked you to do, and was not aware I wanted you to."*

continued →

Then I began wondering how much I had explored Area 2, (the part where I am blind but my students see clearly). I have, of course, asked for feedback from the trainees at various points in a course. I have tried to observe trainee reaction to things that happen in the training room, especially the unvarnished reactions that come through voice, body posture, breathing and skin tone etc... Why have I never actually asked trainees to keep a diary of the micro and macro ways in which I impede their learning, or am simply wrong for them?

An Experiment of my own

Over Easter 2001, I taught a two-week, " Creative Teacher" course to eight well-informed and well-trained Inset colleagues, six of them from Northern Europe, one from Northern Switzerland and one from Northern Spain. Over the first week I asked them to spend 10 minutes at the end of each day making individual, private notes of all the ways in which I had blocked them or messed up their learning process. (I was present in the room, but doing my own things over at the end of the room). At the end of the first week they indicated that they did not want to continue with the exercise. I then asked them to write me a letter indicating my errors, drawing on their diaries. Here is what some of them wrote:

Person 1.
Mistakes that Mario made which disturb my learning

I find it extremely disturbing and difficult to make notes on some minor things and concentrate at the same time on something else, something more important from my point of view.

My first training error was to get the trainee doing this trainer-mistake spotting exercise! Maybe this is a Northern person unhappy with double-tasking, ie, with the request to do two things simultaneously.

On Tuesday you were "teacherific" (teacherish+ horrific). Inger wanted to learn the difference between "loud" and "loudly". You didn't answer right away but confused the issue by adding "aloud" to the set of words.

Yes, I was.
If I can't readily answer, then I throw up a smoke screen of extra complexity.

You probably embarrassed people a couple of times on purpose. This is what happens to me at school when I try to correct my pupils in the way I was shown, teacher training college. (I try to get them to find out the mistakes for themselves.)

Talking to me is bringing this teacher to think about her own behaviour and beliefs.

I sometimes find it hard to concentrate. I am still thinking about a problem we have discussed, or an exercise or I am writing my notes and you start on something new(It is difficult to concentrate on making notes or any other individual work eg reading or writing, if you start making comments at the same time.)This causes misunderstanding.

This is rude, other-unaware behaviour on my part. Is it due to a mad desire to teach as much as I can? How do I create this anxiety in myself?

My head is sometimes so full of new ideas that it starts aching in the afternoon.

I can hear Bernard Dufeu laughingly saying to me: " As Pilgrams all you do is stuff geese!"

But I still need more theory... on NLP, for instance, and how to use it in my work. That might open new gates.

I mostly go from the details to the big picture. She needs the big image first.

Person 2.
Hindering Actions in Mario's Teaching

When we are asked to read a hand-out quietly, some trainees talk to you and you answer them. In this way the group misses out on useful information or explanations and I find it hard to concentrate (the same, goes for writing activities. Why don't you get the students to silently write the words on the board that they want explained, and you'll explain them when everybody is ready to listen.

This sounds like the plea of a very auditory person, who finds stray speech distracting. Paradoxically, I am expressing my own very auditory need in nattering to people. I'd do well to subordinate my need to hers.

Please write unknown words, such as people's names on the board, clearly!
Please punch your photocopies before handing them out. -

Reaction 1: " these are piffling details."
Reaction 2: clarity in board-writing is vital to very visual folk... to Enneagram
No. 1 people who strive for perfection. Better smarten up. If I can see copy-punching as a matter of courtesy, it will come easily to me.

It's a shame you furnish us with photocopies without losing a word about them. Why don't you raise our interest to read them by saying one or two sentences about what they contain?

Wow, and I am so consciously proud of the wealth of material I stack on their chairs without any heavy, didactic spiels about it. For her, at least, my " wealth of input" feels shapeless, without a frame, without an index.

Person 3

Trainer Mistakes

I only remember that you didn't always explain the meaning of the word, or give a synonym of that word, or even you added new word. But it was rarely. But it may sometimes be very confusing for the student: they still don't know the word, and for dessert they receive another new word! Sometimes you explain things very quickly, expecting that we know what you are talking about, but some of us may not follow your way of reasoning. Sometimes I need more theory, more basic information about the subject of the session. Frankly, nothing blocked me or make me feel that I was under pressure during your lessons.

My tempo is wrong for her. I failed to check how well she was understanding. I was too much in self, and not enough outside self, observing. I was too detailed, did not give her enough of an informational, intellectual frame.

Person 4

You annoyed me...

I was slightly annoyed, during my lesson on Fawlty Towers, when you insisted on sitting on the floor after we had watched the clip and were discussing the exercise. I can't explain why but I find it difficult to talk to someone who I would have to look down upon.

She expressed annoyance at this bit of behaviour more than once orally, as well as in her letter. What was I doing by sitting on the floor, in terms of her unconscious needs? I was conscious of avoiding being bullied by a dominant female, this avoidance being a central bit of my life script. I would have felt bullied if I had soothed her annoyance by sitting on a chair, as she wanted. Do I need to play out these proxy dramas in my trainees' training space? Dysfunctional.

What the experiment has taught me

The trainee thoughts and feelings above are helpful to me in a variety of ways.

1) They make me think of one particular colleague who is strong in many of the areas where my weaknesses, as observed by my trainees, lie. I have a better chance of clearing away these mistakes by positively modelling on her than by feeling bad about each error. Modelling is the process of trying to be like another and is, perhaps, the major form of social learning. For better or for worse, children model hugely on their parents. Consciously modelling on particular excellences in others has long been central to my work life.

2) This experiment has been especially beneficial to me as I tend to be very self-referenced (in making decisions I tend to spend much more time looking in than looking out.) This exercise makes me pay attention to clearly, consciously articulated opinions of others, thoughts I cannot easily twist to suit my inner convictions. (the very fact that I felt the need to gloss the feedback of the trainees (in the right hand column above) shows how much I need to masticate, engulf and mario-ise what comes from outside) The voices of trainees I came to respect and feel affection for over two intensive weeks, are likely to successfully resist my need to twist them so they sound as I want.

3) The fact that the trainees did **not** like doing this exercise over the first week, shows me how powerful the initial **group honeymoon period** can be. I asked them to find downsides in what was an overwhelming positive experience for most of them. One person expressed this honeymoon feeling by writing me a letter with a dozen major positive points and just a couple of piddling negative ones. I had specifically asked for Mario errors! Stirrings of **storm*** did not happen in this little group until well into the second week. You often discover the strength of unconscious flow when you ask people to swim against it. I think this is what I did here.

4) As a consequence of 3 above, the right time to launch this exercise is some way into the course, after they have come out of the initial flush of group honeymoon. The activity might even help some people to express stormy feelings they may have.

5) A general piece of learning, for me, from this little experiment, is that the flow of feeling in a group is what makes the course what it is, not the trainer's technical input, nor his knowledge, nor their knowledge, not his goals nor their goals. If, as trainer, I manage to be in tune with this river, then I'll probably be in the right place at the right time for me and hopefully, symbiotically for them too.

* The word **storm** is used here to designate the period of unrest in the life of a voluntarily assembled group between the initial "honeymoon" period, in which people generously try to get to know each other, and a later, more settled, work-a-day period to the group's life together. People seem to begin **storming** when and if the behaviours and beliefs of others start to grate on them. In my experience not all groups go through a period of **storm**, and, unlike some colleagues I respect, I do not see the need to provoke **storm** if it does not arise naturally.

Staying Afloat: Three perspectives on classroom language learning

by Michael Hall and Hazel Sales, UK

This article describes a combined language teaching and team-teaching experiment conducted over three years by two lecturers with groups of final year College students studying a module on English Language Teaching. It looks at the process mainly from the classroom FL teacher's observations on language teaching and learning, and the module leader's teaching and learning objectives. It also includes quotations from the students on their expectations, participation and learning. First-hand experiences and comments from all three viewpoints provide the basis for this integrated description.

Language teachers as language learners

The classroom teacher's view (Michael Hall)

Hazel, a colleague of mine, teaches English Language Studies to mostly native-speaking undergraduates, and at the beginning of their final year she asks me in to give them an introductory language lesson in Mandarin Chinese. Some of her students will become EFL teachers, so the aim of this Mandarin session is to give them a feel of what it is like from the learner's point of view to start learning a foreign language.

Back when I was starting out as a teacher I was twice exposed to the same experience, and in both cases the language used was Mandarin. Any foreign language will do for this purpose, but Chinese is particularly suitable for European students as:

a) they are less likely to have come across it before
b) there are few lexical items or grammatical concepts that they might recognise
c) the written language will offer them no help.

Beginners in Chinese really do start from scratch!
The process that has evolved between Hazel and me goes through five phases:

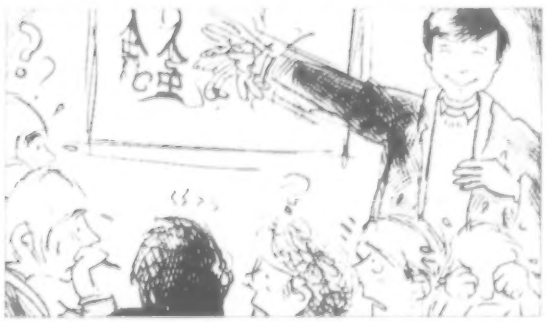
1) I arrive unannounced and teach the students for twenty minutes, using only the target language.
2) We stop and talk about the experience for maybe fifteen minutes, in which we focus on what was happening and what they have learned.
3) After I have left the room Hazel gets the students to write about a page of A4 describing the experience and their reactions to it.
4) This feedback is examined by both of us.
5) The following week I meet the group again for about half an hour and talk about the issues which have arisen from their writing.

Within each group of about 15 students the majority will be British and female, and there may be a couple of students from other countries (typically from the EU) whose first language is not English. During the twenty minutes of the Mandarin lesson I get them to repeat and manipulate greetings, introductions, to distinguish between the pronouns, to respond to Yes/No questions and distinguish between "male" and "female". The hardest part for the students is using the pronouns appropriately (e.g. responding to "Who are you?" with "I " rather than "You".)

I do the language work in five stages: speaking to them, repeating what I have said, getting the students to repeat after me, getting them to respond to me, then getting them to interact with their neighbour. The students get positive reinforcement from me whenever possible ("Very good" or a thumbs up) and the situation is managed with a little bit of classroom language supported by plenty of body language (especially pointing). If a student gets stuck, I move on to someone else until we get a correct response, then go back to the student who had problems. It's teacher-directed and the class are always working together, so that they usually get to hear others answering my questions before they have to answer themselves.
It's the only time I ever teach complete beginners these days, and I find it an exhilarating experience. It's enormously satisfying to see how much students can learn in a short time, and to know that they learned it from me, even if they forget most of it within a few days. But it's hard work which requires intense concentration, and after twenty minutes I'm as ready to stop as they are.
The element of surprise helps to get undiluted responses to the experience. It may put more pressure on students, especially at the beginning, but I am careful to be supportive throughout. I believe that doing it this way makes them try harder and take the situation more seriously.

The oral and written feedback gathered from the students reveals several significant aspects of the experience. The quotations are from their own writing.

1) The most commonly reported reaction to the situation, at least to begin with, is anxiety (*"total confusion and panic at first", "horror", "a bit shocked", "scared"*) at "being thrown in at the deep end", a phrase used by several. Students don't know what is going on because this has been sprung on them (*"This chap began the lesson in a totally alien language"*).



2) In a very short space of time, and without knowing what language they are learning (is it even a real language?), they are expected to repeat, respond and then initiate. The initial "passive" anxiety about not understanding soon becomes an "active" anxiety about having to perform (*"As soon as he got to me I knew my brain would cut out." "A bit overpowering to be the centre of the whole room's attention."*).

3) For some this gives way to a realisation that the situation is tightly structured, that I am trying to make it as easy as possible for them (*"I was surprised at how quickly I managed to guess the meanings of the different phrases", "He made himself clear through gesture and repetition without showing he might think we are all a little silly for not picking it up yet."*). So it becomes a bit of a game in which it's okay to get things wrong, though this doesn't stop feelings of failure when they are unable to answer (*"incredibly frustrating when you cannot grasp what is being said"*). In fact when this happens, as the teacher I feel this is more my failure than theirs.

4) Many are reassured that they are *"all in the same boat" ("I noticed that we looked at each other when we were stuck, as if to reassure ourselves that we were not alone in our difficulties." "I knew the other members of the group and could trust them.")*.

5) For some this anxiety never quite goes away, but others are able to relax once they realise that the situation is not threatening for them (*"I don't think anyone was too embarrassed at having to repeat phrases - I certainly wasn't."*). So it would seem that the learners who see it as a game rather than a threat enjoy this experience more and are able to relax more quickly (*"What amazed me was how much fun it was!"*). It's tempting to guess that this helps them to learn more effectively, but who really knows?

In terms of the way in which they deal with this situation, learners adopt different learning styles and strategies.

1) A small minority try to write things down (*"I had to write down my own version of the language", "I would have liked [the] chance to have written some sort of notes"*), and read them back when they are called on to participate. The only help I give them in this regard is a deliberate red herring - three or four Chinese characters written on the board, just to see whether anyone will attempt to copy them down.

2) Some will try and translate everything into English to make sense of it (*"I was trying to match the foreign words to the equivalent in my own language", "This phrase means 'I am' in that language"*). It's difficult to know what is going on in their minds here - some, to judge by their written and oral feedback, may be literally putting everything into English, word for word.

3) Others recognise the situation in terms of grammatical structures (*"I managed to pick out the personal pronouns", "We learned the present tense of the verb to be"*) or language functions (*"We learned to greet one another and introduce ourselves"*).

4) In any group of foreign-language learners some are learning a third or fourth language. Those in the group with a first language other than English seem to find the experience less threatening. Presumably they have had to struggle with English and are used to coping with a degree of uncertainty. Some of the British students, many of whom have been exposed for some years at secondary school to the teaching of a foreign language, admit to being thrown, at least to begin with, by the absence of translation and explicit explanation. (*"We had to work out the translation for ourselves." "Teacher could have used some English as well - would not have been quite so baffling"*). Others who have spent time in a foreign country and picked up some of the language there are, to judge from their oral feedback, more likely to swim than sink.

I have suggested that the experience for the teacher and observer is enlightening and rewarding in various ways. My aim for the learners is to offer various insights into language learning:

- Speaking a language is not the same thing as speaking about a language.
- There are many ways of learning a language, and they may be all going on at the same time in the same classroom.
- Success in language learning may depend on finding a method of learning which is most suited to the individual's intelligence and personality.
- Uncertainty does not have to be threatening.
- Attaining proficiency in a language is likely to be a long, painstaking process.

and into language teaching:

- There are many ways of teaching a language.
- The teacher should know the target language better than the students, but does not need to be a better language learner than the students.
- A good teacher knows some of what the students are experiencing, can quickly assess the level of proficiency of each and adjust the input accordingly.

This is an invaluable experience for prospective language teachers, as it is easy to lose touch with your students and underestimate the complexity of the struggle they are going through. It can also be a humbling and sobering experience to realise that native speaker proficiency in your own language is no predictor of success in learning another language, and that even for the most talented learner the process requires a major long-term investment of your time, your effort, and yourself.

continued →

Active Learning About The Learner In ELT

The module leader's view (Hazel Sales)

Background

I like to work with Michael on a twelve-week module we run every year, called English Language Teaching (ELT). He helps at the very start of it by teaching Mandarin to mainly UK students, who are undergraduates in the final year of a BA (Hons) course. Since they are English Language Studies students expecting to learn about ELT, it comes as a shock to find themselves learning a Chinese dialect in the very first lesson!

The process

1) Michael and I have found a routine that works well. We arrange it so that the Mandarin lesson is the very first item on their learning agenda. It happens when the students are still caught up in the excitement of the first week of the new academic year, seeing old friends again, throwing off the habits acquired over the long summer break, and getting used to the routines of the academic timetable once more.

2) Michael walks through the door, greeting them in Mandarin. Coming from another faculty, he is unknown to the students, and the look on their faces shows their surprise. The students are unlikely to have been exposed to any Asian languages, with the exception possibly of Cantonese and Japanese, which they may overhear at times when groups from Hong Kong and Japan are studying at the College. Whilst it may seem unnatural or even unkind, we feel the element of surprise greatly increases the impact and value of the experience. If the students know in advance what is going to happen, they are likely to be more relaxed and not take the situation as seriously - and the students themselves have confirmed this view. Not giving them any opportunity to prepare themselves, we find, motivates them to try harder.

3) After greeting them, Michael quickly writes his name on the blackboard in Chinese characters, at the same time pointing to himself and saying the Mandarin version of his name. So astonished are the students, that some try to copy the characters down, reverting for a moment to the kind of automatic student behaviour to be found in the lecture theatre.

4) Michael speaks only Mandarin throughout the lesson, and uses a teaching methodology reminiscent of the Direct Method in that he models utterances and elicits oral responses. He uses paired and chain practice, and drilling, to teach them to say things like "I am Kathryn. Who are you?", before moving on to distinguish between the different subject pronouns. Then Michael points to me and asks in Mandarin "Who is she?", at which point the students gasp at the addition of yet another new word to their lexicon.

5) After twenty minutes or so, just as they feel their concentration flagging, Michael ends the lesson and talks for ten or fifteen minutes to the group about what they have been learning. When he leaves, he assures the students that he'll return to evaluate the experience with them during their next seminar.

6) As soon as he leaves, the students write about the lesson in an attempt to capture their own reactions and recollections. Experience has shown that they usually like a few pointers, and so I put questions up on the board designed more to help the words flow than to prescribe, like, for example, "How did you react to the lesson?", "How much did you learn?", "How did you learn?", "What about the others .... how did they get on?", "How were you taught?", "Did you notice anything interesting about the teaching?", "What did you think of the lesson?"

Twelve weeks later, students write their perceptions of the Mandarin lesson as part of a broader evaluation of the module. Their comments bear out my belief that the lesson achieves a variety of changes in student attitudes in a very short time. Their comments are quoted in italics in the next section.

How students benefit

Better understanding of learners' needs

First, I want the students to realise from the outset that this module is radically different in the way it is delivered, and in the demands it makes on them. Many British undergraduates have not had the chance to appreciate that they shoulder much of the responsibility for their own learning. I find that they have to be weaned away from lectures and tutor-led seminars towards an awareness of learner-centred teaching. Helping them to develop an understanding of the role of the learner in ELT is a fundamental objective of the module. They need to introspect on their own language learning behaviour to develop a better understanding of the learner in a foreign language lesson. Michael's lesson makes them much more aware of learners' needs and perceptions, and of the importance of their active involvement in the learning process:

Having the Mandarin lesson at the beginning of the course was shrewd as it gave the class a clear idea of how the module was to be approached and gave students an idea of what the teaching experience would be like for L2 students.

The Mandarin lesson at the start of the course put the learner in the same position as an L2 speaker so that we understand the problems experienced by foreign students = Realistic understanding.
On reflection it is good to be placed in the shoes of a student learning another language. I can now appreciate how a language learner feels.

Active participation in the learning process

Second, I feel this active learning is one of the key ingredients of successful language learning, and I want the students to grasp this from the beginning. Michael's Mandarin lesson catches them by surprise, and places them in a situation where they have to participate and co-operate with each other in order to function. Since they are working in an unknown language, they are all in the same situation and sharing similar experiences. The teacher is friendly and interesting, but he expects them to speak from the very beginning. The lesson relies upon their full participation and concentration, and cannot progress without their faltering utterances in Mandarin.

> *The Mandarin lesson made us feel as real students sitting in a chair learning a totally different language. It made us feel like beginners in language learning.*

However, most students found the hard work balanced by enjoyment and interest:

> *I found the Mandarin lesson most enjoyable.*
> *The Mandarin lesson was very useful as it provided us with an insight into the learner's situation and it was fun too.*

Towards understanding CLT principles

Third, the lesson helps the students to start thinking about language teaching methodology in general, and communicative language teaching (CLT) in particular. It does this by raising their awareness of how a language learner might feel and react in a language learning class. By experiencing first-hand the highs and lows of a learning situation, I find the students are more receptive in follow-up seminars and lectures which focus on the learner's perspective:

> *On reflection, it was very beneficial to the whole module. It gave us hands-on experience of how the learner feels.*

Helps student presentations and teaching practice

Fourth, the lesson helps with student-led presentations, a part of the course which has as a major component the exploration of different ELT methodologies, ranging from the Grammar-Translation method to more recent methods like Suggestopedia and the Silent Way. Students will have to try out different teaching methods themselves, and make formal presentations of them to their peers. It also prepares them for their own peer-teaching and micro-teaching practice later in the module. It helps them to see Michael demonstrating a language teaching method, and at the same time to be on the receiving end of that method. The perceptions they gain during Michael's lesson help them to distinguish between the different methods, and provide insights into the role of the teacher as well.

This student describes the enduring benefits of the experience in helping her to understand methodological issues:

> *Now on reflection, after completing the module, I can appreciate the full value of that exercise [the Mandarin lesson]. It was really helpful in putting us into a realistic situation as foreign students and how they might feel. This stayed with me throughout the module which helped my understanding of how certain techniques are used in language learning methodologies.*

In considering aspects of presentational language, another student shows her increased awareness, when she considers teacher-talk and the problems she might encounter in a micro-teaching exercise involving genuine L2s:

> *During the preparation for the lesson I had to teach [micro-teaching Japanese students], I was constantly worried that I would not be understood, that my language would be pitched too high, and I would be left struggling to make myself understood. Perhaps that was caused by the times during the Mandarin lesson when everyone's faces went blank.*

Conclusion

Finally, I find that this mini-Mandarin lesson achieves far more than any traditional lecture can, and in far less time. It primes the students well for what lies ahead. It brings the learner's perspective home to them with a clarity and speed that no amount of lecturing on the topic could guarantee to achieve. And, as we have shown in this paper, it provides some fascinating insights into the language learning process.

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See also "The foreign language lesson – Trainees prepare the trainer's demonstration" by John Carmichael, The Teacher Trainer 1/2 page 8

WRITERS!!!

The new TESOL three volume series entitled 'Professional Development in Language Education' is seeking chapter contributions from around the world describing different forms of professional development. The series editor, Tim Murphey, requests expressions of interest by Dec. 15 and final submissions by March 1, 2002. For a more in depth description of each volume and instructions for submissions, please go to the following TESOL web page: http://www.tesol.org/pubs/author/books/calls/2001profdev.html

Case Study Envelopes

Setting

Any course where 50% or more of the participants (Ps) want to raise issues, puzzles, problems from their work in order to get discussion, advice and ideas from other Ps.

Materials

Large envelopes, a typewriter or word processor and blank paper

Steps

1. Ask Ps to write down or type up the issue that they want help with, anonymously, and in the form of a mini case study i.e. a paragraph or so containing the who, what, where and when of their issue plus their personal feelings and things they have tried already.

2. Take the case studies in and type them up if Ps have not done so already. Each one needs to be on a separate piece of paper. All names of real people need to be removed. You need a ratio of one case study or more to two Ps.

3. Put each case study in a different numbered envelope and in the centre of the room.

4. Explain that Ps, in pairs, should come and pick up one envelope, note down its number, read the case study inside it, and then on a separate piece of paper, individually, write down any ideas, suggestions, advice they have to offer on the subject.

5. Next, the pair can discuss the case and their individual ideas between them. This usually sparks off extra ideas which can be written down too.. No idea already written down should be crossed out.

6. All written ideas are then put back in the numbered envelope and replaced in the centre of the room.

7. Ps repeat steps 4-6 until time is up or they have read and responded to all the case studies. Of course, after the first case study they will be reading the advice written down by other pairs as well as the case study so reading will take a little longer.

8. Take in all the envelopes and for your own homework, read through all the suggestions. If you have anything useful to add, write it down too and put it in the appropriate envelope.

9. There are several possible ways forward:
a) Envelopes can be given out at random(making sure that nobody gets their original case study back) and pairs can read the contents and prepare a summary of the case study plus written comments and present these later by posting them on a notice board or reading them out loud.
b) People can take back their own envelopes (discreetly so that others do not see) and can read and note the contents. They can be asked to write you a letter or diary entry where they comment on the advice.

Advantages

- Ps are required to specify and concretise their issues.
- Ps see how many ideas their peers can generate. This encourages mutual respect.
- Ps often find out that their peers would be equally floored by the difficult problem that they are grappling with.
- You, the trainer, do not have to be the fount of wisdom for all issues.
- You see what the Ps know and if you have extra ideas, you can make sure they are relevant and in accord with what is already known.
- The framework of this exercise works equally well in staffrooms, TD groups and language classes and so can be applied by Ps to other contexts.

Disadvantages

- Typing up case studies takes a little time as does the reading of all the comments and the adding of your own.
- Some people work very quickly so you may need other tasks up your sleeve for these folks.
- Some people are very shy about reclaiming their envelopes as they do not want others to know what problem they own.

Acknowledgements

I learnt this from Katie Plumb who learned it from Pilgrims' colleagues at the Hilltop (The nickname for the Pilgrims summer programmes held at the university of Kent, Canterbury, Kent.) Katie also added the variation below.

Variation:
1. Everyone writes their issue/problem on a blank piece of paper, folds it and places it on the floor in the middle of the room. (or collect them and then redistribute them to different people).

2. Each person then picks up someone else's paper and writes suggestions or advice and puts it back on the pile. They then pick up another and do the same. This can go on until you see that ideas are beginning to run out.

3. Redistribute the papers, making sure that everyone gets someone else's paper. They then read them carefully and summarize them to the group and discussion on each issue can take place.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column picks out publications which are relevant or interesting to modern language teacher trainers and swiftly describes them so that you can gauge if they are interesting enough to look at or buy.

Teachers in action by Peter James (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521-59689-0. Intended mostly for experienced and inexperienced trainers working in in-service education and development of primary and secondary non-native teachers of TESOL. The tasks and resources are presented in six chapters: exploring teachers' knowledge, identifying topics to investigate, exploring a topic, investigation in class, evaluating learning, resources for trainers. Tasks are clearly written up with aims, preparation etc in recipe style.

Counselling for managers by Nigel MacLennan (1996) Gower ISBN 0-566-08092-3. All managers find themselves counselling occasionally yet few receive training in this demanding aspect of the job. Cartoons, humour and exercises aim to reduce the gap between learning skills from a book and actually putting them into practice. This honest and accessible book debunks myths and strips the task down to an eight stage model which actually looks workable!

70 activities for tutor groups by Peter Davies (1999) Gower ISBN 0-566-08000-1. An A4 collection of 70activities developed through a research project at the University of Huddersfield especially for tutors working in discussion-based subjects. The activities are designed to stimulate discussion via imaginative group work even in areas such as abstract ideas, numerical data and primary documents. The first section considers activities by genre such as display, games, worksheets, group work and role play.

SEDA publications
If your job includes staff development and you work in higher education, you will probably know about SEDA, the Staff and Educational Development Association, and its conferences, qualification routes and publications. These last include A4 spiral bound paperbacks on e.g. 'Good practice working with international students', 'Getting to grips with assessment', 'Academic tutoring', and 'Effective peer tutoring in further and higher education'. The one I have found most useful is 'Staff development in action', by Sally Brown and Phil Race (1997) ISBN 0-946815-79-8. It's a collection of SD resources including originals for display and suggestions on how to use them. All are available from SEDA, Selly Wick House, 59/61 Selly Wick Road, Selly Wick, Birmingham B29-7JE.

Designing language courses by Kathleen Graves (2000) Heinle and Heinle ISBN 0-8384-79009-X. As other books in the TeacherSource series, this 300+ page volume draws together three strands: Teachers' voices (verbatim quotes from practising teachers), Frameworks (the author's view of key concepts and issues) and Investigations (tasks for the reader to use to personalise the material) each highlighted with a margin symbol. The author teaches course design at SIT, Vermont, USA and uses a flow chart of descriptive verbs (assessing needs, formulating goals, developing materials etc) as the basic organising principle for her work. Plenty of examples, tasks and further reading throughout.

Planning lessons and courses by Tessa Woodward (2001)CUP ISBN 0-521-63354-0. In the Cambridge Handbooks for Teachers series. 250 pages of practical principles and ideas arranged around real life questions such as; Who are the students? How long is the lesson? What can go into a lesson? How do people learn and so how can we teach? What can we teach with? What are our freedoms and constraints? Plenty of photocopiable material, lively visuals and thought-provoking analysis throughout.

Innovation in ELT Eds D.Hall & A. Hewings (2001) Routledge ISBN 0-415-24124-3. This reader contains 22 essays from different institutional, geographical and cultural contexts, one fruit of the collaboration between the Open University UK and Macquarie University, Australia in order to develop new curriculum materials for study at Masters' level. The topic is choices made within constraints when designing and evaluating curricula. 280+ pages of small type, well-referenced.

Primary teacher education Eds. C. Richards et al (1998) Falmer Press ISBN 0-7507-0845. This collection of articles challenges recent UK policy in primary teacher education and development. Five sections include discussion of the changing context, the National Curriculum for initial teacher education, pedagogy in primary T.Ed. and mentoring issues.

The mentoring manual by M.Whittaker and A.Cartwright (2000) Gower ISBN 0-566-08147-4. Using wide- ranging examples from business, education and the voluntary sector, this book offers ideas and photocopiable material for mentors to adapt while planning their own mentoring scheme. Clear, well-laid out, lots of bullet points.

The practice of ELT (3rd edition) by Jeremy Harmer (2001) Pearson Education Ltd. Aimed at practising teachers and those studying on in-service training programmes and postgraduate courses, this edition, a genuine and large revision of previous editions, includes chapters on the world of English, describing language, learners, teachers, popular methodology, mistakes and feedback, managing classes, focusing on language, the four skills, designing, planning and evaluation.

Stress free teaching by Russell Joseph (2000) Kogan Page ISBN 0-749431148. Pocket-sized, practical book to help managers and

continued

teachers to identify causes and effects of stress and to consider the best stress reduction strategies for them personally. Contains hints such as 'Learn to be firm, not angry' and some case studies.

2000 tips for teachers Eds N Packard & P Race (2000) ISBN 0-749431822 Kogan Page Mainly for new primary and secondary teachers and in association with the Times Educational Supplement, this collection of practical tips presented in bullet point format and under sections such as tips across the curriculum, IT, special education needs, primary, secondary has the feel of the kind of real, tried and true strategies you get from seasoned colleagues when you start teaching. Recommended.

Let's set up á youth camp (1996) and Our English class (1999) both by Montse Irun and Neus Caufape Pages Editors. ISBN 84-7935-36-0 and 84-7935-621-9. Although a tiny percentage of the text of these locally produced paperbacks is in Catalan, they are still extremely useful if you are trying to get English camps and clubs for 12-13year olds going in your area. Full of interesting activities and tasks with extensions and evaluation suggestions.

Zero prep by L. Pollard and N. Hess (1997) Alta Books ISBN 1-882483-64-2. Icebreakers, listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and structure activities are the main chapters and they are for really busy teachers with several different classes a day who, whilst having a clear vision of where they want to go, don't always have the time to do lots of preparation of materials. Also for teachers trying to learn not to work so hard and to listen to learners more.

Teachers' voices 6: Teaching casual conversation Ed Helen de Silva Joyce. (2000) Macquarie University. ISBN 1-86408-615-7. This series offers first person accounts by teachers of their involvement in collaborative classroom- based action research. This particular project involved nine teachers whose accounts are prefaced by a background paper on casual conversation with implications for teaching. There follow sections on, e.g materials for lower level learners, student performance, teaching casual conversation for work and at a distance.

Practical strategies for living with dyslexia by Maria Chivers (2001) Jessica Kingsley Pubs. ISBN 1-85302-905-X Tests for dyslexia available for children from the age of 4.5 years are discussed. Many dyslexics also have ear and eye problems that go undetected. The book lists possible remedies available such as tinted glasses, nutritional supplements, exercise, multi- sensory teaching methods and NLP and provides useful contact addresses and further reading leads.

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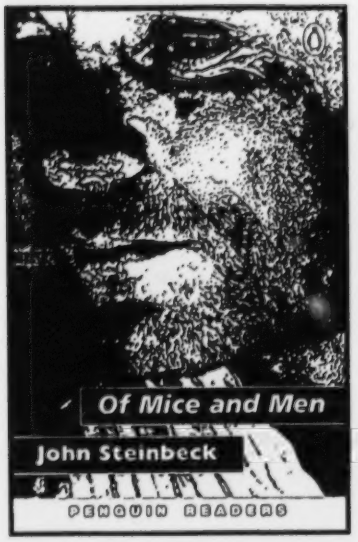

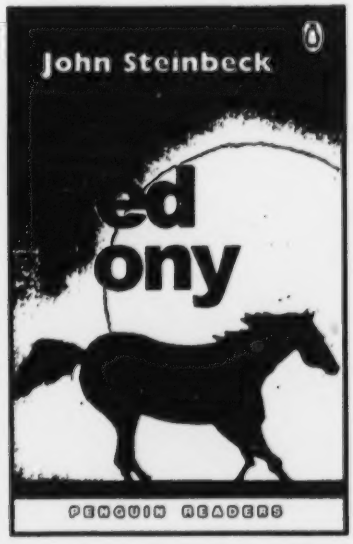

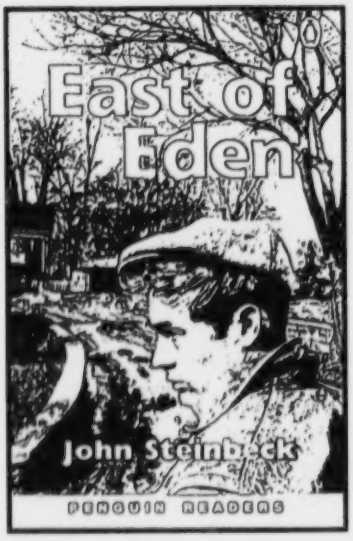

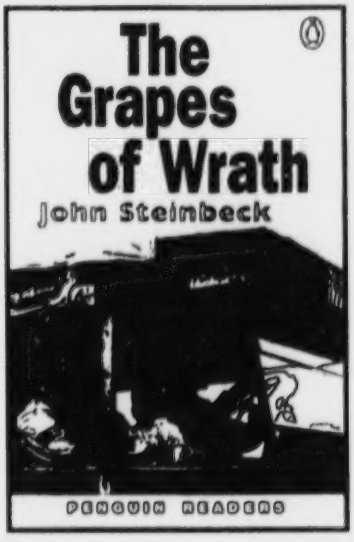

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